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# THE LEADING ENGLISH POETS FROM CHAUCER TO BROWNING

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# THE LEADING ENGLISH POETS FROM CHAUCER TO BROWNING

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION
BIOGRAPHIES, AND GLOSSARY

BY

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# PREFACE

THE distinctive characteristic of this anthology is the restriction of the number of poets represented with the consequent possibility of including an unusually liberal amount of the work of each author. In consulting anthologies, the present editor has felt that the collections have suffered from the attempt to include selections from all the poets who have risen above mediocrity. Such attempt has in most cases resulted in an inadequate representation of the work of any one author. No reader can feel that from a single poem of a half-dozen stanzas, or even from several short poems, he has gained a fair degree of appreciation of the poetical qualities of an author. Milton's fame does not rest upon *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Lycidas*, nor Wordsworth's upon *Tintern Abbey* and the poems of the *We are Seven* type. To appreciate the position these men rightly occupy in literature, we must have an acquaintance with more of their poetry, we must read and appreciate some of the larger and greater poems that constitute their product. In this belief the editor of the present anthology has limited the number of poets in the period between Chaucer and Browning to those he considers the leading poets, and has thus enabled himself to present, not only the well-known shorter pieces included in all collections, but much of those longer and more important poems which in the final analysis constitute the foundation of the authors' fame.

Any anthology involves judicious selection. That the present one will meet in all respects the varying judgments of all its readers is too much to expect. One person will criticize it for the amount of space devoted to Spenser as compared with that devoted to Chaucer; another will query why Herrick should be allotted so liberal a representation; a third, measuring the number of poems and pages given to the romantic authors, will accuse the editor of having yielded to the spell of the modern. Against such various lines of criticism the editor has little defense to offer. He has tried, within the limits of a single volume, to present a collection of the best and most representative poems of the leading English poets from Chaucer to Browning. He has tried in his selection to approximate the general opinion of those worthiest to judge.

The representation given to one of the poets in particular, Shakespeare, will seem unduly out of proportion to the position he justly has at the head of English literature. Shakespeare, however, is primarily a dramatist, and his greatest poetry is in dramatic form, not to be separated from its context without notable loss of significance. Hamlet's Soliloquy, to one unfamiliar with Hamlet's character and problem, would lose much of its force; Jaques' dissertation on the ages of man needs the forest background, the Duke and his company at their simple meal, and a knowledge of Jaques' character and position to render it vital. The editor has, therefore, after careful consideration, confined the selections from Shakespeare to those pieces which are purely poetical and depend little or not at all upon a dramatic context.

The text in this edition has followed that of the Cambridge editions wherever it has been possible. Many of the brief introductory notes to the separate selections have also been adapted from or taken bodily from the Cambridge editions. The short introductory outline of English poetry is intended merely as a framework in which the reader may conveniently locate the respective poets represented in the anthology. In writing the lives of these twenty-one poets the editor has striven to summarize the most important known facts and to give in a few words a criticism of the work of each poet. In the preparation of the glossary the attempt has been

made to give the modern synonyms of the obsolete, archaic, and dialectic words in the selections from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Burns.

In conclusion, the editor desires to extend his thanks to the many friends who by their advice and assistance have helped to form this anthology. When the project was first considered, a tentative table of contents was submitted to a number of persons known to be interested in the reading and study of poetry and critical coöperation was requested. Many of the suggestions given in answer to this request were of great value and were gladly adopted. Lieutenant Robert C. Richardson, Jr., at present assistant professor in the Department of English and History at West Point, prepared the glossary and read the manuscript of the biographies. Miss Irene W. Starr did much of the work in making the indices. Above all, the editor's acknowledgment is due to Professor Henry A. Beers, of Yale University, who has given much valuable criticism of the selections and of the introductory outline.

L. H. H.

West Point, New York,
*August, 1915.*

# CONTENTS


INTRODUCTION . . . . . xiii

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

TRUTH . . . . . 1
LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE . . . . 1
THE CANTERBURY TALES . . . 2
THE PROLOGUE . . . . . 2
THE PRIORESSES TALE . . . 10
THE NONNE PREESTES TALE . . 14

EDMUND SPENSER

THE FAERIE QUEENE (BOOK I) . . 21
EPITHALAMION . . . . . 107
PROTHALAMION . . . . . 112

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SONGS:

"TELL ME WHERE IS FANCY BRED" 115
"UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE" 115
"BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND" . . . . . 115
"O MISTRESS MINE, WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING" . . . . 115
"HARK, HARK! THE LARK AT HEAVEN'S GATE SINGS" . . . 115
"COME UNTO THESE YELLOW SANDS" . . . . . 115
"FULL FATHOM FIVE THY FATHER LIES" . . . . . 116
"WHERE THE BEE SUCKS, THERE SUCK I" . . . . . 116

SONNETS:

SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY? . . . . . 116
WHEN, IN DISGRACE WITH FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES . . . . 116
WHEN TO THE SESSIONS OF SWEET SILENT THOUGHT . . . . 116
NOT MARBLE, NOR THE GILDED MONUMENTS . . . . . 117
LIKE AS THE WAVES MAKE TOWARDS THE PEBBLED SHORE . . . 117
WHEN I HAVE SEEN BY TIME'S FELL HAND DEFACED . . . . 117
SINCE BRASS, NOR STONE, NOR EARTH, NOR BOUNDLESS SEA . . . 117
TIR'D WITH ALL THESE, FOR RESTFUL DEATH I CRY . . . . . 117
NO LONGER MOURN FOR ME WHEN I AM DEAD . . . . . 118
THAT TIME OF YEAR THOU MAYST IN ME BEHOLD . . . . . 118
TO ME, FAIR FRIEND, YOU NEVER CAN BE OLD . . . . . 118
WHEN IN THE CHRONICLE OF WASTED TIME . . . . . 118
LET ME NOT TO THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS . . . . . 118

ROBERT HERRICK

HESPERIDES:

THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK . . 119
DELIGHT IN DISORDER . . . 119
TO DIANEME . . . . . 119
THE WOUNDED CUPID . . . 119
TO DIANEME . . . . . 119
CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING . . 120
THE CAPTIV'D BEE . . . . 120
TO CHERRY-BLOSSOMS . . . 121
TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME. . . . . 121
TO ANTHEA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING . . . . . 121
TO MEADOWS . . . . . 121
OBERON'S FEAST . . . . . 122
TO DAFFODILS . . . . . 122
THE BRACELET TO JULIA . . . 122
TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON . . . . . 122
TO BLOSSOMS . . . . . 123
TO A BED OF TULIPS . . . . 123
TO PHYLLIS, TO LOVE AND LIVE WITH HIM . . . . . 123
ART ABOVE NATURE . . . . 124
THE NIGHT-PIECE: TO JULIA . . 124
UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES . . . 124
TO HIS BOOK . . . . . 124

NOBLE NUMBERS:

HIS LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT 124
A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE . . . . . 125

The Dirge of Jephthah's Daughter . . . . . 125
To keep a True Lent . . . 126

John Milton

On the Morning of Christ's Nativity . . . . . 127
L'Allegro . . . . . 130
Il Penseroso . . . . . 132
Lycidas . . . . . 133
Sonnets:
To the Lord General Cromwell . 136
On the Late Massacre in Piemont . . . . . 136
On his Blindness . . . . 137
To Cyriack Skinner . . . 137
Paradise Lost . . . . . 138

John Dryden

Mac Flecknoe . . . . . 180
Religio Laici . . . . . 183
To the Pious Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew . . . . . 193
A Song for St. Cecilia's Day . 196
Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music . . . . . 196
Theodore and Honoria . . . 199

Alexander Pope

Ode on Solitude . . . . . 205
Epistle to Mrs. Blount, with the Works of Voiture . . . . 205
Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady . . . . . 206
The Rape of the Lock . . . 208
Eloisa to Abelard . . . . 220
Satires:
Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot . . 225
The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace . . . . 231

William Collins

Ode to Simplicity . . . . . 238
Ode written in the Beginning of the Year 1746 . . . . . 238
Ode to Liberty . . . . . 239
Ode to a Lady on the Death of Colonel Ross, in the Action of Fontenoy . . . . . 240
Ode to Evening . . . . . 241
Ode to Peace . . . . . 242
The Passions . . . . . 242
Dirge in Cymbeline . . . . 243

Thomas Gray

On the Death of a Favourite Cat 244
On a Distant Prospect of Eton College . . . . . 244
Elegy written in a Country Churchyard . . . . . 245
To Adversity . . . . . 247
Sonnet on the Death of Mr. Richard West . . . . . 248
Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude . . . . . 248

Oliver Goldsmith

The Traveller . . . . . 249
The Deserted Village . . . 255
Stanzas on Woman . . . . 261

William Cowper

Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk . . . . 262
The Task (Book V) . . . . 262
The Diverting History of John Gilpin . . . . . 273
On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk . . 276
The Poplar Field . . . . . 278
On the Loss of the Royal George . 278
To the Nightingale . . . . 279
To Mary . . . . . 279

Robert Burns

Address to the Deil . . . . 281
The Cotter's Saturday Night . 282
To a Mouse . . . . . 285
To a Mountain Daisy . . . 286
To a Louse . . . . . 287
Song: Composed in August . . 287
Address to the Unco Guid . . 288
A Winter Night . . . . . 289
The Gloomy Night is gathering fast . . . . . 290
Tam O' Shanter . . . . . 290
Holy Willie's Prayer . . . 293
A Rose-Bud, by my Early Walk . 294
The Silver Tassie . . . . 294
Of a' the Airts . . . . . 295
My Heart's in the Highlands . 295
John Anderson my Jo . . . . 295
Thou Lingering Star . . . . 296
Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut . 296
Ae Fond Kiss . . . . . 296
The Banks o' Doon . . . . 297
The Deil 's awa wi' th' Exciseman 297

The Lovely Lass of Inverness . 297
A Red, Red Rose . . . . . 298
Auld Lang Syne . . . . . 298
Comin' Thro' the Rye . . . 298
Duncan Gray . . . . . 299
Saw ye Bonie Lesley . . . . 299
Scots, wha hae . . . . . 299
Highland Mary . . . . . 300
Is there for Honest Poverty . 300
There was a Lass . . . . . 301
Mary Morison . . . . . 301

## William Wordsworth

A Night-Piece . . . . . 303
We are Seven . . . . . 303
Expostulation and Reply . . . 304
The Tables Turned . . . . 304
Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey . . . . . 305
There was a Boy . . . . . 307
Nutting . . . . . 307
"Strange fits of passion have I known" . . . . . 308
"She dwelt among the untrodden ways" . . . . . 309
"I travelled among unknown men" . . . . . 309
"Three years she grew in sun and shower" . . . . . 309
"A Slumber did my spirit seal" 309
Lucy Gray . . . . . 310
Ruth . . . . . 310
The Prelude . . . . . 313
Michael . . . . . 324
"My heart leaps up when I behold" . . . . . 330
Resolution and Independence . 330
Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802 . . . 332
Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais, August, 1802 . . . 332
"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free" . . . . . 332
On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic . . . . . 333
To Toussaint L'Ouverture . . 333
In London, September, 1802 . . 333
London, 1802 . . . . . 333
"It is not to be thought of" . 334
"When I have borne in memory" 334
To the Daisy . . . . . 334
The Green Linnet . . . . . 334
Stepping Westward . . . . . 335
The Solitary Reaper . . . . 335
Yarrow Unvisited . . . . . 336
To the Cuckoo . . . . . 336
"She was a phantom of delight" . 337
"I wandered lonely as a cloud" 337
Ode to Duty . . . . . 337
Fidelity . . . . . 338
Character of the Happy Warrior 339
"Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room" . . . 340
Composed by the side of Grasmere Lake . . . . . 340
"The world is too much with us" . . . . . 341
"Where lies the land to which yon ship must go?" . . . 341
Ode. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood . . . . . 341
Gipsies . . . . . 344
Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle . . . . . 345
The Excursion . . . . . 346
Yarrow Visited . . . . . 354
To a Sky-Lark . . . . . 355
"Scorn not the sonnet" . . . 356
Yarrow Revisited . . . . . 356
The Trosachs . . . . . 357
"If this great world of joy and pain" . . . . . 357

## Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner . . . . . 358
Love . . . . . 367
The Nightingale . . . . . 368
Christabel . . . . . 370
Kubla Khan . . . . . 377
Hymn before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni . . . . 377
Frost at Midnight . . . . . 379
Dejection: an Ode . . . . . 380
Youth and Age . . . . . 382
Work without Hope . . . . . 382
Epitaph (Nov., 1833) . . . . 383

## Sir Walter Scott

The Lay of the Last Minstrel . 384
The Lady of the Lake . . . 392
Rokeby (Song, "O, Brignall banks are wild and fair") . . . 412

Hunting Song . . . . . 412
Jock of Hazeldean . . . . . 413
"The Sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill" . . . . . 413

Lord Byron

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage . . 414
"When we two parted" . . . . 449
"Maid of Athens, ere we part" . 449
"And thou art dead, as young and fair" . . . . . 450
Stanzas for Music. "There's not a joy the world can give" . . 450
Stanzas for Music. "There be none of Beauty's daughters" . 451
"Fare thee well" . . . . . 451
Stanzas to Augusta. "Though the day of my destiny's over" . 452
Epistle to Augusta, "My sister! my sweet sister!" . . . . . 452
"She walks in beauty" . . . . 454
"Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom" . . . . . 454
"When coldness wraps this suffering clay" . . . . . 455
Vision of Belshazzar . . . . . 455
The Destruction of Sennacherib 456
The Bride of Abydos . . . . . 456
Sonnet to Lake Leman . . . . 470
The Prisoner of Chillon . . . 470
Mazeppa . . . . . 474
Prometheus . . . . . 483
Beppo . . . . . 484
Don Juan . . . . . 496

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Alastor . . . . . 508
Adonais . . . . . 518
Sonnet — Ozymandias . . . . 528
Lines written among the Euganean Hills . . . . . 528
Stanzas, written in dejection near Naples . . . . . 532
Ode to the West Wind . . . . 532
The Indian Serenade . . . . . 533
Love's Philosophy . . . . . 534
The Cloud . . . . . 534
To a Skylark . . . . . 535
Ode to Liberty . . . . . 536
To ———. "I fear thy kisses" . 541
The Question . . . . . 541
To Night . . . . . 542
To ———. "Music, when soft voices die" . . . . . 542
To ———. "One Word is too often profaned" . . . . . 542
A Lament . . . . . 543
Lines. "When the lamp is shattered" . . . . . 543
A Dirge . . . . . 543

John Keats

On first looking into Chapman's Homer . . . . . 544
Sonnet. "To one who has been long in city pent" . . . . . 544
Sonnet. "When I have fears that I may cease to be" . . . . 544
Lines on The Mermaid Tavern . 544
Endymion (Book I) . . . . . 545
Fancy . . . . . 559
Ode. "Bards of Passion and of Mirth" . . . . . 560
The Eve of St. Agnes . . . . 560
Ode on a Grecian Urn . . . . 567
La Belle Dame sans Merci . . 568
Ode to a Nightingale . . . . 568
Lamia . . . . . 570
To Autumn . . . . . 579
The Last Sonnet . . . . . 580

Matthew Arnold

Requiescat . . . . . 581
Resignation . . . . . 581
Sohrab and Rustum . . . . . 584
The Forsaken Merman . . . . 596
Philomela . . . . . 598
Dover Beach . . . . . 598
The Last Word . . . . . 599
Morality . . . . . 599
A Summer Night . . . . . 600
The Buried Life . . . . . 601
Lines written in Kensington Gardens . . . . . 602
The Future . . . . . 602
The Scholar-Gypsy . . . . . 603
Thyrsis . . . . . 608
Memorial Verses . . . . . 611
Rugby Chapel . . . . . 612
Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse . . . . . 614

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

The Lady of Shalott . . . . . 617
Œnone . . . . . 618

The Lotos-Eaters . . . . . 622
Ulysses . . . . . 624
Tithonus . . . . . 625
"Flower in the crannied wall" 626
"Break, break, break" . . . 626
Songs from the Princess:
"As thro' the land at eve we went" . . . . . 627
"Sweet and low" . . . . . 627
"The splendor falls on castle walls" . . . . . 627
"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean" . . . 627
"Home they brought her warrior dead" . . . . . 627
"Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height" . . . 628
In Memoriam . . . . . 628
Songs from Maud:
"Come into the garden, Maud" . 664
"O that 't were possible" . . 665
Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington . . . . . 666
Idylls of the King:
Dedication . . . . . 669
Coming of Arthur . . . . 670
Gareth and Lynette . . . 677
Lancelot and Elaine . . . 699
The Holy Grail . . . . 719
Guinevere . . . . . 732
The Passing of Arthur . . . 742
To the Queen . . . . . 749
Crossing the Bar . . . . . 750

Robert Browning

Pippa Passes . . . . . 751
Cavalier Tunes:
Marching Along . . . . 759
Give a Rouse . . . . . 760
Boot and Saddle . . . . 760
The Lost Leader . . . . . 760
"How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" . 761
Cristina . . . . . 762
Love among the Ruins . . . 763
Up at a Villa — Down in the City 764
Home-Thoughts, from Abroad . 765
Home-Thoughts, from the Sea . 766
Saul . . . . . 766
My Star . . . . . 773
Incident of the French Camp . 773
My Last Duchess . . . . . 773
The Italian in England . . . 774
The Last Ride Together . . 776
Protus . . . . . 777
The Statue and the Bust . . 778
Fra Lippo Lippi . . . . . 781
Andrea del Sarto . . . . . 787
Rabbi Ben Ezra . . . . . 790
Caliban upon Setebos . . . . 793
Prospice . . . . . 797
The Ring and the Book (Book VII. Pompilia) . . . . . 798
Hervé Riel . . . . . 823
Pheidippides . . . . . 825
Clive . . . . . 827
Epilogue . . . . . 832

Biographical Sketches

Geoffrey Chaucer . . . . . 835
Edmund Spenser . . . . . 838
William Shakespeare . . . . 841
Robert Herrick . . . . . 843
John Milton . . . . . 846
John Dryden . . . . . 850
Alexander Pope . . . . . 853
William Collins . . . . . 856
Thomas Gray . . . . . 858
Oliver Goldsmith . . . . . 861
William Cowper . . . . . 865
Robert Burns . . . . . 867
William Wordsworth . . . . 871
Samuel Taylor Coleridge . . 874
Walter Scott . . . . . 877
George Gordon Byron . . . 879
Percy Bysshe Shelley . . . 883
John Keats . . . . . 885
Matthew Arnold . . . . . 888
Alfred Tennyson . . . . . 890
Robert Browning . . . . . 893

Glossary . . . . . 897

Index of First Lines . . . 909

Index of Authors and Titles 914

# INTRODUCTION

## AN OUTLINE SKETCH OF ENGLISH POETRY FROM CHAUCER TO BROWNING

It is a curious fact that in the history of English poetry the even centuries have been the periods of the most noteworthy and original production. The age of Chaucer, the rich and exuberant English renaissance of Elizabeth's time, and the new springtide of the romantic revival came respectively in the fourteenth, sixteenth, and eighteenth centuries. We do not intend to imply that poetry lapsed in the intervals, that the odd centuries were wholly flat, stale, and unprofitable, nor do we imply that all the great poetry of our literature can be grouped around the even century marks. The exquisite lyrics of Lovelace and Suckling and Herrick, the noble verse of Milton, the polished heroic couplets of Dryden and Pope, the smooth melody and careful art of Tennyson, and the force and inspired insight of Browning would at once give us the lie. What we do mean is that the successive tides of original poetic inspiration seem to have flowed with the even and ebbed with the odd centuries. The Cavalier lyrists and even the sublime Milton are a continuation of the Elizabethan renaissance, and no one will deny the debt of Tennyson and Browning to the poetic revival in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Hence for our brief outline of the course of English poetry, we are led to dwell with special emphasis upon the poetry of the age of Chaucer, of the age of Elizabeth, and of the age of Wordsworth.

### I. The Chaucerian Period

1340–1400

Any sketch of English poetry may well begin with Chaucer. Although it is trite now to speak of him as the "Father of English Poetry," that phrase expresses accurately his position in the history of our poetry. He won his eminence under peculiarly difficult conditions. The Norman Conquest in 1066 had prevented the establishment of a standard English speech and had given free scope to the welter of dialects, the remnants of the Anglo-Saxon contending with the new Anglo-Norman. In the field of literature, the English were in bondage to continental models. Men dreamed, maidens loved, and birds sang in England just as they conventionally did in Normandy and France. Before Chaucer, few English works have the native English flavor.

And what did Chaucer do that has won him his place as the first of our long line of English poets? Where there were no models in English for him to follow, he went in the beginning to the literatures of France and Italy, at first translating, paraphrasing, and adapting their material to his verse; but later, and herein his fame lies, he conceived (and executed in part) a great original English poem. By his association with continental Europe he tended to bring the restricted English world into a closer touch and sympathy with the great forerunners of the Renaissance. Among the chaos of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman speech, he chose with rare natural judgment the elements which combined strength and grace. With a perfect ear he introduced into English versification those meters and verse forms, with the exception of the sonnet and the

blank verse, which have been found by succeeding generations of poets to be best adapted to English.

Entirely apart from these great services to English literature, Chaucer deserves the name of poet by the character of his work. More than five hundred years have passed and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* retain their freshness and interest, — indeed, their readers are increasing in number and in devotion. Surely if permanence be one of the tests of literary worth, Chaucer's poems have met the requirement fully. Although never a poet of deep or sublime vision, Chaucer's wide sympathies, kindly humor, and accurate characterization raise his work to a rank just below that of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth. He was a born story-teller and an artist in words. Other poets of his time, as Langland and Gower, had equal opportunities, but lacked the native genius that has brought Chaucer his enduring fame.

## II. The Fifteenth Century

Chaucer's successors in poetry during the fifteenth century paid loyal and sincere tribute to his genius, and tried to imitate his style. "O maister dere and fader reverent," says Occleve, and Lydgate in the same decade speaks of "My maister Chaucer." These successors, however, have contributed little poetry of value. They imitated the outward forms, but could not for want of genius infuse these forms with genuine emotion and vitality. We have nothing in their work to compare with the striking group of living people in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, or with the genially garrulous Wife of Bath; instead, we read endless romances and allegories, with the conventional poet's dream of Cupid and Venus, and conventional birds singing in conventional trees in a conventional month of May. We have to pass to the marvelous renaissance of the next century to find Chaucer's true poetic successors.

## III. The Renaissance

There have been periods in history when the civilized world seemed to shake itself free from the trammels of traditional customs and habits of thought and definitely to take a step toward the achievement of a new and higher state of existence. One of these periods, affecting not only literature, but religion, art, politics, social relations, and all the other communal activities of men, was that of the century between 1450 and 1550. Beginning, perhaps, with the diffusion of classical Greek learning that followed the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the new life infused Italy, spread north into France, and affected even far-away England. Once started, it spread with accelerated speed and intensity. The inspiring literature of the ancient high Greek civilization revivified thought and set it moving in strange and unconventional channels; the introduction of printing brought the cost of books within the reach of the ordinary reader, whereas before even a small library had been the rare luxury of the wealthy; the intrepid pushing forward of the boundaries of man's knowledge of his world by the discoveries of unsuspected lands and peoples across the sea caused thinkers to revise their theories and question accepted authorities; the revolt in the north against the authority of the established Roman Catholic Church shook the very foundations of faith. It became an age of inquiry, of search for truth and knowledge. In religion, in science, in literature, great champions arose who thought, acted, and wrote under the inspiration of new ideals.

The new sense of life, the renaissance, did not reach England until about the time of the accession of Elizabeth. Under her wise rule, the English nation seemed to expand with a new sense of importance and power. A political solidarity resulted from Henry VIII's policy toward the

Church of Rome, reaching its height at the crushing of the Armada of the Catholic power Spain. Humanists, like Erasmus and More, uncloaked the follies and vices of the time and by precept and implication pointed out the way to better conditions. Education became fashionable where before it had been the acquisition of clerics. The sons of noblemen and gentlemen were seen in increasing numbers at the universities. The foreign tour became a necessary part of a full academic course, impelling the young men to France and especially to Italy, then the recognized center of art and letters.

In English poetry, the first products of the awakening were disappointing. Englishmen were too absorbed in the political and religious turmoils incident to the revival of learning to engage in literature. It is noteworthy, however, that two young noblemen of the early part of the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, circulated their polished verses in manuscript among their courtier friends after the fashion of the Italian *litterati*. Some years after they were dead, these poems formed a large part of *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557). The poems themselves are not valuable for their genuine inspiration and feeling, but for two new verse forms which they introduced into English poetry, namely, the sonnet and the blank verse. Within fifty years these two forms, crudely used by their originators, were the media for the greatest of our English poetry.

## IV. The Elizabethan Period

In the 1570's Sir Philip Sidney was still deploring the barrenness of the field of English poetry when with apparent suddenness a figure arose who summed up in himself many of the most striking characteristics of the new epoch. A product of the revival of learning in the university life, steeped in the classics and thoroughly familiar with Italian literature, a gentleman and a courtier, Edmund Spenser, by his first published poem, *The Shepheard's Calendar*, in 1579 was stamped at once as a great poet. In the same year he was working upon *The Faery Queen*, three books of which were published in 1590 and were hailed immediately as the greatest work in English. The new stanza form which he used in *The Faery Queen* was one of rare beauty and flexibility; his richness of imagination was reflected in the romantic and gorgeous pageantry of knights, dwarfs, fair ladies, horrible demons and dragons, all moving in the story of a single poem; his splendid idealism is shown in the spirit of beauty with which all nature and all common things are treated; his metrical skill and melody have never been surpassed in English poetry. Spenser sprang full-grown as the first birth of the renaissance in English poetry. Spenser many times acknowledges Chaucer as his poetical father, but in most ways he is very different. Spenser has little of the humor, the appreciation of the actual characters that lived and moved about him, the wide sympathy with men as men, that has immortalized the *Canterbury Tales*. Harry Bailly, the Wife of Bath, the Canon's Yeoman, and the rest of the famous company were beyond the power of Spenser to draw. His was a world detached from that of men, a world peopled by incarnated virtues and vices and dotted with conveniently located mountains, lakes, and grottos. Spenser shows no supreme insight into human character and motives. no dramatic genius to urge his plot rapidly to an inevitable conclusion, indeed, no superior sustained narrative power; but in his work we feel the presence of a vivid imagination and we admire the perfection of verse.

While Spenser in remote Ireland was developing the allegory *The Faery Queen* or writing his *Amoretti*, the overwhelming popularity of the drama in England was drawing the genius of all the writers of the day. Men whose individual talents might have yielded great epics or supreme lyrics wrote for the playhouses of London. Marlow, the epic master of the mighty line, Lyly,

Greene, Jonson, and the lyric Lodge, all wrote chiefly for the stage. Indeed, so notable is the poetic element in the Elizabethan drama that the plays are with justice ranked in English poetry as well as in the history of English drama.

Among the Elizabethans one name stands out supreme. In form and craftsmanship a product of his age, Shakespeare by his varied talents transcended the work of all his contemporaries. How the Stratford lad who fled penniless to London in 1587 developed into one of the world's great trilogy of poets is a mystery not to be solved until we know the physiological reasons for genius. In his twenty-three years of youth at Stratford he learned to know nature and country life; in the following years in London, he came into contact with all the varied artificial life of the city, from the dregs into which he must have fallen at the beginning to the glitter of the court with which he was familiar before the end. He saw life from many sides and with inspired insight reproduced what he saw. In an attempt to point out the particular excellencies of Shakespeare we must pause. His work reveals such depth of insight, such innate knowledge of the springs and courses of emotion, such mastery of language, such art without artifice that we lack in English the standards of comparison. He was of his age and yet superior to it. His apprenticeship was passed in the London theaters, patching up old plays and adapting old scenes to the rapidly changing demands of the time. He graduated into an original and successful playwright. He became shareholder in a theatrical company, a man of wealth and prominence. In an age when the ponderous Jonson was esteemed as the classical poet and dramatist, and when the non-classical plays were looked upon as inferior art, Shakespeare must have been unconscious of the enduring literary value of his work. He took no care to publish his work and at the prime of life retired to live in Stratford as a country gentleman. Yet these despised productions have not only been read by students through the intervening centuries, but have actually held the stage. Where his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors have been forgotten, Shakespeare is studied and acted to-day. He has become not alone an English figure, but a world figure. He was a man "who saw life steadily and saw it whole." He has command of the comic and the tragic, of the humorous and of the sublime. His harp seems to have all the range of man's life and character, from the lowest to the highest. Country squires and their hangers-on, rude artisans, thieves, servants, nobles, princes, kings, fairies, witches, magicians, he draws them all in very truth. He sees into the souls of men. He truly is one of those few who

> take upon 's the mystery of things,
> As if we were God's spies.

### (*a*) THE METAPHYSICAL POETS

While Shakespeare was writing and the greatest dramatic products of the Elizabethan age were on the boards, John Donne and his followers were expressing the spirit of the Renaissance in their original and peculiar poetry. Dr. Johnson later gave to these men the name of "metaphysical poets," which has clung to them ever since. They were, indeed, a product of their age, expressing the liberalism which is a most striking characteristic of Elizabeth's reign. Their poetry abounded in quaint conceits, unexpected twists of thought, far-fetched analogies, paradoxes, hyperboles, unique verse forms, and deep reasoning on life, death, God, and the soul. Since English poets had been self-convicted of copying their thought and art from other literatures, English readers hailed with approval the strange novelties of Donne, Southwell, Quarles, and Herbert. In the court of James, himself an acute logician, a great value was set upon subtle metaphysical distinctions, so that Donne and his school were in their prime the chief exponents of poetry in England. To-day those very conceits and subtleties which made them acceptable

to their contemporaries have cast them into limbo, whence they are only resurrected to explain influences that affected the work of later and better known poets.

## V. The Puritan Reformation

The conflict between king and Parliament which developed to a crisis in the reign of Charles separated the English into two great parties, often popularly called the Cavaliers and the Roundheads. With the king stood the Cavaliers, the nobles and courtiers, gay, brave, happy-go-lucky gentlemen: with the Parliament stood the Puritans and the defenders of civil liberty, an austerely sincere minority too commonly misunderstood because of the excesses of a small party of fanatics.

### (*a*) cavalier poetry

The political division of the nation was reflected in the literature. Many of the Cavaliers were poets, not men who adopted literature as a profession, but who looked upon the knack of hitting off verses as the proper acquirement of a gentleman. Many of the verses were coarse and vulgar, many were artificial and worthless, but a few were graceful and sincere. Lovelace, Cleveland, and Sir William Davenant were Cavaliers who actually suffered for their king; Suckling, Carew, Vaughan, and Herrick sympathized with the king, although it did not fall to their lot to bear martyrdom for him.

The greatest of these Cavalier poets is Herrick. A clergyman by profession, he was in spirit a true Cavalier, gay, witty, and worldly. He was, indeed, by nature a pagan, preaching in his poems a pagan creed and loving nature with a pagan love. In his little Devonshire vicarage, far from the political turmoil of London, he wrought his delicate lyrics. He lost his churchly living at the success of the Puritans, of course, but regained it at the Restoration, and on the whole suffered little from his sympathy for the King. He was a poet of exquisite fancy and skilled artistry. As a lyrist, describing the rural scenes and customs in England or addressing a dainty love-poem to an imaginary (or real) Julia, he has few superiors in English. He is always the artist, careful of his craftsmanship, sure of his results. He has left us a larger and better amount of verse than any other of the Cavaliers.

### (*b*) puritan poetry

Of the Puritans, Marvell, Wither, and Milton stand out above all others. In a way Milton, greatest of these, has come to express both by his life and work our conception of the Puritan characteristics. His inflexible and lofty purpose, his earnestness, zeal, self-sacrifice, integrity, and rigid morality, combined with a marked austerity of manner and a narrowness of view in certain ways, are what we denote vaguely by the term "puritanical" to-day. In his poetry he is peculiarly the poet of sublimity. His subject bespeaks his nature, "Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart." The Miltonic line is a peal of deep organ music. In his greatest poem he bears us at once without seeming effort to heights from which we can discern God, Man, and Satan. Our world with its struggling millions fades into its proper perspective, and the great essential, the justification of the ways of God to men, becomes to us, as it was to the poet, foremost. In his lesser poems as in his greatest the same dignity and sustained power carry his theme at once to a height beyond that of the ordinary poet. Even in his early *Hymn on The Nativity* we find the same intense and concentrated aspiration that carried him later to *Paradise Lost*. He never wrote an ignoble line.

## VI. The Restoration

The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 was accompanied by a violent reaction from the austerities of the Puritan rule. The worthless and licentious king infected all the society of his day, and for a time the pursuit of pleasure was the most serious business of the time. Charles modeled his court after the court of France, centering in it the fashionable idleness of the time. He encouraged in literature the tastes which he fostered in his court, so that for the most part the Restoration drama is licentious and the Restoration poetry is trifling. Buckingham, Rochester, Sedley, Buckhurst, Sackville, important court poets in their time, are to-day, so far as literature is concerned, names almost forgotten.

One man of genius emerged from this welter of poetasters — John Dryden. He had written little before the Restoration, but with the immediate outburst of literature at Charles's return he identified himself with the court party and began his career. At first occupied with panegyrics, as the fine *Annus Mirabilis*, in 1668 he set himself to the more lucrative writing for the stage, and for fifteen years was England's foremost dramatist. In 1680 he turned to satire, and in *Absalom and Achitophel* pilloried the Whig leaders of the day. Two years later he wrote a remarkable didactic poem, *Religio Laici*. After the loss of all prospect of royal favor by the Revolution of 1688, he continued bravely at work with his pen, writing *Alexander's Feast* for the musicians, translating numerous poems from the Latin, and composing his very unusual *Fables*. Dryden's range and versatility are remarkable. He is never sublime and seldom seems inspired, but he is a careful artist in his verse and has a capacity for sustained narrative and a rare talent for satire. As a poet he established the heroic couplet as the standard medium for satire, didactic, and descriptive poetry, thus ushering in the work of Pope in the next generation.

## VII. The Pseudo-Classical Period

The first half of the eighteenth century, following the death of Dryden in 1700, saw the rapid increase of prose writing and little new development in poetry. The pamphleteer flooded the stalls with political papers; the daily journals and forerunners of the modern magazines interested people by their novelty and their topical hits; Richardson and Fielding with their prose fiction gained a huge audience. Poetry in the meanwhile seemed to the contemporaries to have been established by Dryden in fixed forms and to be incapable of offering new and unexpected sensations. Readers admired art more than force and looked for polish rather than emotion. It was a periwigged era, in art as well as in fashion. Writers themselves called their age the Augustan age, seeing in Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson, and Burke the likenesses of Horace, Virgil, Cicero, and others who were the glories of Latin letters in the reign of Augustus; but modern critics prefer the term "classic" or "pseudo-classic," to indicate the artificiality as opposed to art, the social veneer, the formality, the adherence to fixed and accepted rules, in the literature of the period. The world of letters ran in well-worn grooves; there was, to contemporaries, an atmosphere of finality about art: civilization seemed to the conventional man to have struggled to its climax, from which no step in advance was conceivable.

The chief English poet of the time, Alexander Pope, expressed in his life and his work the characteristics we have noted. A vain, irritable, precocious cripple, he was, upon the appearance of his *Rape of the Lock* in 1712, heralded as the first poet of England. That position he maintained until his death thirty-two years later. During his supremacy, genuine inspiration seemed dead in England. The impassioned lyric passages of the Elizabethan and Cavalier poetry, the moral sublimity of Milton, seemed lost. The aim of Pope and his followers was to carry

Dryden's verse form to its *n*th degree of refinement. In the polish and nice balance of his lines he satisfied his age, but, it must be admitted, sacrificed the natural force and strength inherent in English expression. Although many of his lines and phrases give such an impression of finality of form that they have become axiomatic, his poetry when read as a whole paralyzes our attention by its monotonous swing and balance. We must not, however, condemn Pope too harshly. He was striving for the excellencies which were esteemed by his contemporary poets and he succeeded beyond them all; Blackmore, Garth, Granville, Walsh, Pomfret, Parnell are forgotten names to-day, yet they were all continuing the Dryden verse tradition with Pope. Pope never transcended his own time, never by divine insight and inspiration saw and revealed hidden beauties of form, character, thought, and ideals in his world, but he pictured in his work more perfectly than any of his contemporaries the artificial and superficial qualities of the world in which he moved.

The principles of the classical or pseudo-classical school were those of Goldsmith, but, in curious agreement with the inconsistency of this poet's character, a tenderness and sincerity of sentiment which belong to a new and different order of poetry are embodied within the classical forms in his best poems. By instinct Goldsmith was a romanticist; by training and by association he was a classicist. His *Deserted Village* is a rhymed essay comparable in style to Pope's *Essay on Man*. It has been redeemed from the oblivion that has been the lot of so many similar poems by its direct and sincere human sympathy, its simplicity of language and vividness of characterization. We may regret the monotony of the rhymed couplets, but we treasure the picture of Auburn, and the village parson, and the village schoolmaster, and the spirit of ideality in which the whole scene is conceived.

## VIII. Early Romanticism

The excess of polish and formality in the poetry of Pope and his school induced its own reaction, a reaction not sudden, violent, or universal, but none the less significant. Even within the lifetime of Pope this reaction began and it continued with increasing vigor after his death. The vague dissatisfaction with current poetical standards and models expressed itself at first in the revival of the study of old authors. The love for Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton had never died away entirely, even in the vagaries of literary fashions, and the new lyrists drew inspiration from the works of these poets. Allan Ramsay with his Scotch dialect poems and his pastorals, and James Thomson with his *Castle of Indolence* and *Seasons*, hark directly back to Spenser; Collins and Gray are infused with the spirit of Milton, not the Milton of *Paradise Lost*, but the lyric Milton of the *Nativity Ode*, of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, of *Lycidas;* and William Cowper shakes himself at the end entirely free from bondage to the contemporary fashions.

Of these forerunners of the new movement in poetry, Collins and Gray were greatest, — greatest not because of clearer consciousness of the novelty of their work, but because of a truer and finer poetic inspiration. These two poets are always linked together in literary history. They both wrote exquisite odes, they both were followers of Milton, they both are now considered as belonging spiritually and emotionally to the romanticists. Gray has left a larger body of completed work than Collins and his *Elegy* has achieved a popularity that no poem of Collins has ever approached, yet many critics discern in the work of Collins a finer music, a more vivid imagination, and a truer sense of the ideal form and expression than in that of his contemporary. As lyrists in an age when the lyric was submerged beneath a flood of ethic and didactic couplets, they together carry their poetic tradition from the later Elizabethans to within a generation of Wordsworth.

Very different from the work of Collins and Gray is that of Cowper, and yet the latter is equally opposed to the artistic standards of the school of Pope. Cowper's few famous lyrics (as *On Receipt of My Mother's Picture*, and *The Poplar Field*) are marked by a sincerity of feeling and a truth of expression not found among the poets of the pseudo-classical group, and his greatest poem, *The Task*, is written in an easy, flowing blank verse directly contrary in movement to the poised and monotonous heroic couplets. But Cowper's fame rests upon the loving care with which he drew in *The Task*, a succession of pictures of the scenes, sounds, and incidents in lowly country life. His is what may be called familiar verse. It is nearest the type and tone of conversation. Nothing in the sights about him is too trivial for passing comment, nothing too lowly for his affectionate interest. As we read his verse, we are present with him in his walk, listening to his gentle and sympathetic descriptions of plowman or postman, or of woods or brooks. Though he had not, it is true, the philosophic fervor and passionate force of Wordsworth at his best, he anticipated the latter poet in the kindly descriptions of humble country life.

Shortly after the half-century mark was passed, new influences of the first importance determined the course of the growing literary movement. The attention of the world of letters was drawn to the great wealth of folklore poetry extant in out-of-the-way corners of the world. Collections, discoveries, translations set literary men afire with a new enthusiasm. Brilliant charlatans took advantage of the excitement to forge rude poems purporting to have been found in old churches, abbeys, and the like. It was the time when Ossian was published, and when the "marvelous boy" Chatterton brought to London his Rowley forgeries. Macpherson in 1760 published his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands;* two years later he followed this with the epic *Fingal*, purporting to be a prose translation from the Gaelic of the poet Ossian; three years later the scholarly Percy, later bishop of the Irish Church, contributed a systematic collection of folk-songs and ballads in three volumes, *Reliques of Ancient Poetry;* containing among many the wonderful *Chevy Chase*, *Nut Brown Mayde*, and *Battle of Otterburn*, and in 1770 Percy widened the interest by introducing to the contemporary English world the fascinating rugged mythology of the old Danish, Norse, and Icelandic peoples.

What the work of this unusual decade from 1760 to 1770 did for the romantic movement was to give it definite models and, in a way, recognized standards for a revolt against the accepted formality of contemporary verse. The ballads were simple and rude compared with the faultless style of Pope, but Pope's influence was waning fast. Men turned from the monotonous perfection of his verse to thrill at the direct view of nature and the deep emotion in the old ballads. Sincerity of feeling again became vital to good poetry. The classicists fought to the last, scoffed at the rude verses of a primitive time, but in the end the romanticists carried the day.

With the revival of interest in the ancient ballad poetry came also a general revival of interest in things of ancient time. Gothic architecture, once despised, began to be admired; a glamour was cast by the imagination over the past ages obscuring the elements of rudeness, brutality, and vice, and stressing the supposed chivalry, honor, and courage of earlier ages; the element of mystery in the unknown and unknowable excited abnormal interest; Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* was the forerunner of the romances of terror of Mrs. Radcliffe and "Monk" Lewis.

And then toward the latter part of the century came the throes of the revolution across the channel, exciting among many in England the keenest interest and sympathy. No cause could be nearer and dearer to the English heart than the cause of liberty for which the French people claimed to be fighting. Coleridge was on fire for the cause, and Wordsworth, who was traveling in France, was only restrained from taking personal leadership in the Girondist party by the

stoppage of his allowances from home. Naturally intelligent people thought and talked of little else for years after 1789.

Thus, then, the romantic movement grew. Begun in the age of Pope by a reaction against his polished form and a reversion to the variety and sincerity of feeling of the Elizabethans, it was deeply influenced by the growth of interest in the folk-songs and ballads, by the revival of a love for the mediæval, and by the struggle across the Channel for liberty. It was a movement of rich variety, dominated by no one school of thought or method. The work of one is a return to simplicity of style, with depth of thought and sincerity of emotion, of another is marked by emphasis upon the fantastic, imaginative elements of mediævalism, of another is a modern rendition of ancient folklore, of another is a fanatical adherence to the principles of freedom. Each in his own way feels and interprets the new life in English poetry. The romantic movement is, indeed, as Hugo called it, "liberalism in literature."

During this period, in the north arose a poet who, although by birth and education out of touch with the direct course of the romantic revival, exemplified in his lyrics prominent elements in that movement. It is difficult to account for Robert Burns. Born into a life and environment similar to those of thousands of other Scotch peasant boys, he rose by his native genius to be the foremost literary figure of his time. That his irregular life brought its inevitable result in ostracism and early death cannot affect the beauty and melody of his songs. In these songs, Burns is without peer. Love, humor, satire, pathos, intimate sympathy with nature and with man, all find a place in them. He wrote poetry not by rule, but by instinct. "Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poetry by rule," he said in his first preface, "he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him in his and their native language." He is distinctly the poet of nature, expressing in simple familiar language the emotions common to all men.

## IX. Romanticism

The conscious recognition of the new movement in poetry came with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Wordsworth and Coleridge collaborated to produce this thin volume of poems written in accordance with new and original — so far as classical rules went — principles of poetry. Later each of the poets explained in prose, Wordsworth in his *Prefaces* and Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria*, what these new principles were, dwelling upon simplicity of diction, truth to nature, power of the imagination, and universality of subject-matter. Wordsworth's insistence upon universality of subject-matter and simplicity of diction clashed with the beliefs of the fast-vanishing classical school, for it had long been the belief that certain subjects and situations were in themselves peculiarly adapted to poetic treatment in contrast to other subjects, and that the poet's task was merely to give to such subjects and situations their perfect embodiment in expression. Hence came the classical finish and polish, hence the conscious artificiality of much of the work of the classical school.

But after all, important as the new principles were, the romantic movement is not now known by its principles so much as by its product. Wordsworth and Coleridge were true poets, gifted with the divine insight and faculty of expression that reveals to men the unknown beauties of the world in which they live. Wordsworth was from his youth peculiarly sensitive to natural influences; he came to believe all nature to be directly infused with the presence of a living God; and he realized that the truth that lay behind the universal experiences of men, the common passions and labors, hopes and fears, was the only subject of poetic interest. Nature, and man in nature, were, therefore, his poetic material. A poet, he writes, "is a man speaking to men: a

man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him, delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them."

Coleridge's greatest single work was the *Ancient Mariner*, in which he created by imaginative suggestion an illusion of reality about a supernatural subject. Coleridge represents a different phase of the revival from that represented by Wordsworth, namely, the love of the mysterious and unfathomable in nature. We see it again in *Christabel*, we feel it in the wonderful verses to *Genevieve*. His speculative mind was naturally drawn to mystery and his poetic genius gave to the mysterious apt expression. His vivid imagination, his perfect use of suggestion, his inspired melody of verse stamp him naturally as the greater poet of the two, but unhappily the promise of his young manhood was drowned in laudanum. His later critical writings, great as they are, cannot compensate us for the loss to creative poetry.

The *Lyrical Ballads* were not immediately popular. No one could make head or tail out of the *Ancient Mariner*, and but very few appreciated *Tintern Abbey*. The poetry was too new; the principles enunciated (1800) in the preface were too startling. The literary world could more easily appreciate the first poetry of Walter Scott, which followed more directly the natural development of the revival of interest in the folk-poetry. Scott in 1802–03 published a collection of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and followed this two years later with his first original poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. This narrative poetry, vigorous, heroic, rapid, was at once understood and widely read. Continuing in this vein, Scott poured forth tale after tale in verse, awakening England and Scotland to a high pitch of enthusiasm, then suddenly, with the rise of a new star and the relative decline in popularity of his own poems, stopped, turned to prose, and with his romantic fiction achieved an even greater popularity than before.

Scott's poetry was both romantic and immediately popular. To-day we read it for its absorbing narrative interest rather than for its high imaginative quality. Occasional songs and ballads, interspersed in the action of his poems, show great lyrical genius. Scott was not, however, a careful artist: his scenes and characters are hastily limned and then the succession of incidents occupies all our attention.

## X. Height of Romantic Movement

As the romantic movement was characteristically a movement for freedom in literature, it was natural that in its manifestations it should reflect, more than the literature of Pope's influence ever had, the differing individualities of its writers. Thus, as we have already seen, Wordsworth was a romanticist by virtue of his return to nature and to simplicity of expression, Coleridge by his strangeness and mystery cloaked by an illusion of reality, and Scott by his direct continuance of the tradition of the old narrative ballad story. All of these were for a time eclipsed by a new genius who won unprecedented popular success by the imaginative self-revelation of an individual mind endowed with great energy and openly rebellious against the social and political constraints of the time. The spirit of the French Revolutionists, which appealed to a very large section of the English people, found nowhere a more brilliant exponent than George Gordon, Lord Byron.

The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* appeared in March of 1812, and, as Byron expressed it, "I awoke in the morning to find myself famous." The poet-peer had caught to a nicety the

romantic sensibility of his contemporary world. Within the next few years he astonished and delighted the fashionable London world with a succession of poetic romances, wildly extravagant in plot, intensely individual in style, and imaginatively representative of the tacit unrest in the social order of his day. His social ostracism consequent upon his separation from his wife drove him abroad, whence he could indulge himself even more freely in satire against the bondage of English conventions and, indeed, of all conventions. His later works are all infused with this cynical disparagement of social bonds, this cry of the individual for freedom. His death when aiding the Greeks in their struggle for independence crowned the work of his life with the spirit of self-sacrifice and did much to efface the memory of his past misdeeds.

As a poet Byron was supremely gifted. Through his own intense individuality he caught a universal spirit of his time, the spirit of dissatisfaction and revolt, and embodied it in imaginative forms. Byron was a romanticist, but a romanticist representative of his own age rather than of an interest in and love for the past.

With Bryon we may associate another poet of revolt, Shelley. Shelley, too, was of noble lineage, and suffered social ostracism because he chose to break with the conventions of English society. Shelley, too, found his happiness abroad, there composing many of his greatest poems. Shelley, too, was an individualist, but where Byron's individualistic revolt carried him into practical immorality and bitter and contemptuous satire as a protest against the hypocrisy of the smug London world, Shelley's led him into the realm of the ideal where he endeavored to create a life free from the constraints imposed by what he believed to be ignorance and tyranny. Few people have been so unworldly as Shelley. He lived continually amid visions created by his own vivid imagination. His poetry reflects the passionate fervor of his mental life: he was forever trying to cast in the mould of language the insubstantial images that crowded upon him, to fix indelibly the spirit of wind, or of the bird, or of man. His task was foredoomed to failure, but in the very failure lay success, for his ideals are the ideals of all men and the pain he expresses is the common agony we all suffer.

John Keats, almost unnoticed during his life, has risen in time to a place beside Shelley among the poets of the early part of the century. His poetry, however, and his life were both widely different from the poetry and life of Shelley: there is scarcely more to link their names together than the fact that they were contemporary lyric poets. Keats was not a poet of revolt, for during the whole of his short life he kept aloof from human interests to lose himself in his love for beauty. He did not condemn social customs because in his poetical life he took no interest in them. Poetry was to him a passion, the very essence of life, and the truth of poetry was beauty. He sought this beauty especially in the myths and legends of the past, not alone in Grecian literature but in English. He enriched the romantic movement by recapturing the spirit of the Elizabethan poets. He was drawn to the Elizabethans by their splendid imagery, their easy flowing verse, their fiery enthusiasm and force. He attempted to treat the classical myths with the Elizabethan freedom. He sought for subjects in which he might embody the forms of beauty that flitted before his imagination. His best work is in poems like *Lamia* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, where the interest of the narrative is to him secondary to the picturesque situations and environment. He excelled in gorgeous word-painting, visualizing and expressing his scenes with rare imagination.

## XI. The Victorian Age

A literary revival cannot be maintained continuously at its height of emotional inspiration. Roughly speaking, we may locate the romantic revival between 1780 and 1830; after the latter

year we pass by degrees into the sober after-thought of the Victorian era. Where the romantic revival was marked by an enthusiasm for rebellion against established conventions, a liberalism in art, a love for the simple and natural, the quieter and calmer Victorian age is characterized by introspection and by moral purpose. The new age fostered prose rather than poetry. A large and most important body of prose criticism appeared, showing how the new age needed time and thought to assimilate the inspired lessons of the romanticists. The novel, essay, and history made greater strides than the poem. And both in prose and verse a strong underlying moral purpose is evident, a probing into reasons for social, civil, and religious ills and an attempt to cure them.

Matthew Arnold remains one of the prominent poets of the period. He was a highly educated man, preaching the crusade of culture against philistinism with a passionate zeal and sincerity. The prose essays in criticism have established for him a higher reputation, perhaps, than has his poetry, and yet he was professor of poetry at Oxford and the small body of poetry he has left ranks high.

In his poetry Arnold reflects a certain hesitation and doubt on fundamental religious conceptions. He inherited from his home environment a positive belief in accepted dogma, but his own intellectual desire for more and exact knowledge brought continual questioning and uncertainty. In his poems are recurrent notes of sadness and regret, perhaps inspired by his inward struggle between faith and skepticism. His poetry is intellectual rather than emotional. He found his true expression in his critical writings.

Much more completely than Arnold did Tennyson reflect the temper of his time, for where Arnold's range was narrow, Tennyson's was broad. Tennyson not only revealed contemporary doubts and fears, but also contemporary ambitions, hopes, enthusiasms, ideals. Arnold was critic as well as poet, and inspector of schools and professor at Oxford as well as critic and poet: Tennyson was only a poet. All his life long, Tennyson's whole devotion was to poetry. He occupied a unique place, for he was not *a* poet, but *the* poet of his country.

Not until 1842 was his position established; after the publication of his *Poems* in that year, containing such treasures as *Ulysses* and *Morte d'Arthur*, his supremacy was never questioned. In 1850 he succeeded Wordsworth as poet laureate and published *In Memoriam*, on which he had worked at intervals during the previous sixteen years. The last of the *Idylls of the King* appeared in 1885, the first having been written (not then with a definite idea of an epic cycle) more than forty years before. He wrote steadily until the year of his death, his later works retaining much of the beauty and inspiration of his earlier.

It is difficult now to place Tennyson with certainty in his relative rank among English poets, for we are still so near him that the glamour of his life and contemporary fame blind us. It is doubtful whether he is to be considered as a great original genius, the introducer of new ideas into the world of men. He seems not so much the leader of men as their representative man. He incorporates contemporary ideas in verse: he does not add to the sum of human knowledge. He is the result of his age rather than the creator of his age.

As a poet Tennyson's work is the union of the best qualities of his predecessors: he had the visionary sweetness of Spenser, the simplicity of the ballads as revived in the style of Wordsworth, the majestic power of Milton, the beauty of Keats. It must be admitted, however, that with the union of these qualities, each quality loses a little of its special perfection. Perhaps we feel in Tennyson art rather than inspiration, the sane and worthy poet rather than the seer whose fire is direct from heaven.

Tennyson represented the emotions and ideals of his age: his great contemporary, Robert Browning, strove to pierce deeper into the individual soul in search of the ultimate spiritual

secrets. Browning's degree of success may win for him, in the final judgment of men in years to come, a higher rank than Tennyson. His admirers even now place him second only to Shakespeare.

Browning's ideals in poetry were of the highest. Were we to judge him by these he would indeed rank, not below, but with, Shakespeare, for he sought to find the springs of human thought, feeling, and action, and reveal them to men. He had the insight of a true poet, the vision of a seer and a prophet. With this he combined a rare mental breadth and freedom from bias. He hated cant and hypocrisy and any evidence of these. He impresses us at times as fain to accept unquestioningly the essential rightness of things in this perplexing world of involved sin, suffering, virtue, and happiness; but the man who could write the *Ring and the Book* can scarcely be accused of narrowness.

If Browning had this poetic insight and breadth of view, why cannot he rank indisputably with our greatest? The difficulty lies in his expression. His idioms, his constructions, his language have from his first publications proved a stumbling-block to the wide popular appreciation of his genius. His imaginative creations, wonderfully true and beautiful in their conception, are too often misshapen and warped in their material embodiment. Where a reader's mental effort is distracted continually from the idea to the knotty involved phrases and ejaculations by which the idea is cast forth, that reader is likely to cease the effort. The formation of a Browning society in Browning's lifetime was not a compliment to the poet, but a confession of weakness: it has actually done him more harm than good in stamping him as the poet of a clique rather than the poet of mankind. Shakespeare needed no Shakespearean society in his lifetime to interpret his plays to those who thronged daily to the Globe.

As time goes on, however, the ill-fame of *Sordello* and the ill-advised eulogies of the Browning clique are losing their effect, and among an ever-widening class of cultivated readers Browning is being recognized as worthy to stand among the great poetic creators in our literature. More and more people are braving the difficulties of style to grasp the imaginative vision beneath. He emerges greater as he is more popularly understood.

Browning is the last of the giants. With him who died but a generation ago this outline can fitly close. Much poetry has been written since he died, but none that bears the stamp of lasting greatness. What figures are on the horizon we can but dimly guess. Of one thing, however, we can feel sure: the age of poetry is not gone and will never go. So soon as an inspired poet speaks to men, then will the souls of men respond as they have in the past. A love of poetry is the essence of great thought and great living.

# GEOFFREY CHAUCER[1]

## TRUTH

### BALADE DE BON CONSEYL

FLEE fro the prees, and dwelle with sothfastnesse,
Suffyce unto thy good, though hit be smal;
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal;
Savour no more than thee bihove shal;
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst rede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Tempest thee noght al croked to redresse,
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal:
Gret reste stant in litel besinesse;
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;
Stryve noght, as doth the crokke with the wal.
Daunte thy-self, that dauntest otheres dede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede:
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

### ENVOY

Therfore, thou vache, leve thyn old wrecchednesse
Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral;
Crye him mercy, that of his hy goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial
Draw unto him, and pray in general
For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich mede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

*Explicit Le bon counseill de G. Chaucer*

## LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE

### BALADE

SOM tyme this world was so stedfast and stable
That mannes word was obligacioun,
And now hit is so fals and deceivable,
That word and deed, as in conclusioun,
Ben no-thing lyk, for turned up so doun
Is al this world for mede and wilfulnesse,
That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so variable
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?
Among us now a man is holde unable,
But-if he can, by som collusioun,
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this, but wilful wrecchednesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put doun, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun,
Pitee exyled, no man is merciable.
Through covetyse is blent discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun
Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikelnesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

### LENVOY TO KING RICHARD

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be reprevable
To thyn estat, don in thy regioun.
Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

*Explicit*

[1] The text adopted in these extracts is that of the Skeat edition. — ED.

# THE CANTERBURY TALES

## THE PROLOGUE

*Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury*

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree;
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle nacioums in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.

Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte,
Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.
A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other syde a gay daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere;
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.
Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sëynt Loy;
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she song the service divyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet disport,
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;
Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*
Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES three.
A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye,
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make himselven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,
As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.

Therfore he was a pricasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight;
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;
His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.
A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye,
A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For his ordre he was licentiat.
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a mery note;
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse.
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
[And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;
Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;]
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe
In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.
A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge alway thencrees of his winning.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.
For sothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.
A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.

As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;
For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Iustyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A FRANKELEYN was in his companye;
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicitee parfyt.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Iulian he was in his contree.
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;
A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe.
Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
An anlas and a gipser al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.

AN HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was;
Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certein were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"
And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shine a mormal hadde he;
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by weste:

For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe,
In a gowne of falding to the knee.
A dagge-e hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al
broun;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he
y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chap-
man sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every
lond.
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe and his mone, his lodemen-
age,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been
shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they
were,
From Gootland to the cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.
With us ther was a Doctour of
Phisyk,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or
drye,
And where engendred, and of what
humour;
He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the
rote,
Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
For ech of hem made other for to winne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;
And yet he was but esy of dispence;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therfore he lovede gold in special.
A good Wyf was ther of bisyde Bathe,
But she was som-del deef, and that was
scathe.
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an
haunt,
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to the offring bifore hir sholde
goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was
she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and
newe.
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of
hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten other companye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at seint Iame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawschip wel coude she laughe and
carpe.
Of remedyes of love she knew perchaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.
A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre Persoun of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,

That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche,
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Un-to his povre parisshens aboute
Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek ther-to,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, un-to sëynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
By good ensample, was his bisinesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,
A trewe swinker and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebour right as himselve.
He woldo thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were namo.

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys,
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.
For whether that he payde, or took by taille,
Algate he wayted so in his achat,
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace

The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous,
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

The Reve was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this reves governing,
And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,
With grene treës shadwed was his place.
He coude bettre than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was astored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Biside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;
With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.
Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a Iay
Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye;
Ay '*Questio quid iuris*' wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.
'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede —
For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth —
And also war him of a *significavit*.
In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
The yonge girles of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

With him ther rood a gentil Pardoner
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;

By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe Iet;
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl:
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sëynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and Iapes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie;
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.
Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,
That ye narette it nat my vileinye,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this matere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it.
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhood him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges;
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my Iugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,

Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.'
Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.
'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,
Shal have a soper at our aller cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my Iugement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me therfore.'
This thing was graunted, and our othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales Iuge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his Iugement.
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
With-outen any lenger taryinge.
A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas,
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.
Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde,
Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my Iugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne;
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.'

*Here endeth the prolog of this book.*

## THE PRIORESSES PROLOGUE

*Bihold the mery wordes of the Host to the Shipman and to the lady Prioresse*

'Wel seyd, by *corpus dominus*,' quod our hoste,
'Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,
Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad yeer!
A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a Iape!
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape,
And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.
But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,
Who shal now telle first, of al this route,
Another tale;' and with that word he sayde,
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
'My lady Prioresse, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?'
'Gladly,' quod she, and seyde as ye shal here.

*Explicit*

## THE PRIORESSES TALE

### THE PROLOGE OF THE PRIORESSES TALE

*Domine, dominus noster*

O lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large worlde y-sprad — quod she: —
For noght only thy laude precious
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may,
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hir honour;
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules bote. —

O moder mayde! O mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisedest doun fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in thalighte,
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceived was the fadres sapience,
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere.

My conning is so wayk, O blisful quene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
That can unnethes any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

*Explicit*

*Here biginneth the Prioresses Tale*

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Iewerye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among thise children was a widwes sone,
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eek also, wher-as he saugh thimage
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely child wol alday sone lere;
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner;
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner,
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Till he the firste vers conde al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he preye
Texpounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage;
This preyde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus: 'this song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we deye
I can no more expounde in this matere;
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente.

As I have seyd, thurgh-out the Iewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
*O Alma redemptoris* ever-mo.
The swetnes hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, 'o Hebraik peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han conspyred
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,
That in an aley hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
This cursed Iew him hente and heeld him
faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe
Wher-as these Iewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
What may your yvel entente yow availle?
Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,
And namely ther thonour of god shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souded to virginitee,
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon
The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,
'Of which the grete evangelist, seint Iohn,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they
that goon
Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never, fleshly, wommen they ne knewe.'

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght,
Til finally she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the Iewerye.

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
To every place wher she hath supposed
By lyklihede hir litel child to finde;
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed Iewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously
To every Iew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by.
They seyde, 'nay'; but Iesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,
He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete
wente,
In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon with-outen tarying,
And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
And after that, the Iewes leet he binde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway;
And with honour of greet processioun
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere lay;
Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon
This provost dooth thise Iewes for to sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve.
Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent
Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent

Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was holy water,
And song — '*O Alma redemptoris mater!*'

This abbot, which that was an holy man
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde, 'o dere child, I halse thee,
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tell me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?'

'My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,'
Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
But Iesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,
And, for the worship of his moder dere,
Yet may I singe "*O Alma*" loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem verraily in my deyinge,
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn;
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake."'

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the greyn,
And he yaf up the goost ful softely.
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres trikled doun as reyn,
And gruf he fil al plat up-on the grounde,
And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,
And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
And toke awey this martir fro his bere,
And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete;
Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
With cursed Iewes, as it is notable,
For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, god so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplye,
For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen.

*Here is ended the Prioresses Tale*

## THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PREESTES TALE

'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-more of this,
That ye han seyd is right y-nough, y-wis,
And mochel more; for litel hevinesse
Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I gesse.
I seye for me, it is a greet disese
Whér-as men han ben in greet welthe and ése,
To heren of hir sodeyn fal, allas!
And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,
As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And ther abydeth in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.'
'Ye,' quod our hoste, 'by Seint Poules belle,
Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he clappeth loude,
He spak how "fortune covered with a cloude"
I noot never what, and als of a "Tragedie"
Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne
That that is doon, and als it is a peyne,
As ye han seyd, to here of hevinesse.
Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow blesse!
Your tale anoyeth al this companye;
Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye;
For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.
Wherfor, sir Monk, or dan Piers by your name,
I preye yow hertely, telle us somwhat elles,
For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,
That on your brydel hange on every syde,
By heven king, that for us alle dyde,

I sholde er this han fallen doun for slepe,
Although the slough had never been so depe;
Than had your tale al be told in vayn.
For certeinly, as that thise clerkes seyn,
"Wher-as a man may have noon audience,
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence."
And wel I woot the substance is in me,
If any thing shal wel reported be.
Sir, sey somwhat of hunting, I yow preye.'
'Nay,' quod this monk, 'I have no lust to pleye;
Now let another telle, as I have told.'
Than spak our host, with rude speche and bold,
And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest anon,
'Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou sir Iohn,
Tel us swich thing as may our hertes glade,
Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a Iade.
What though thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.'
'Yis, sir,' quod he, 'yis, host, so mote I go,
But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be blamed:'—
And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,
This swete preest, this goodly man, sir Iohn.

*Explicit*

*Here Biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chaunte-cleer and Pertelote*

A POVRE widwe, somdel stape in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Byside a grove, stonding in a dale.
This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,
She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce,
Napoplexye shente nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner deye.
A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
In which she hadde a cok, hight Chaunte-cleer,
In all the land of crowing nas his peer.
His vois was merier than the mery orgon
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,
Than is a clokke, or an abbey orlogge.
By nature knew he ech ascencioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailed, as it were a castel-wal.
His bile was blak, and as the Ieet it shoon;
Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewely she hath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;
He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
But such a Ioye was it to here hem singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,

In swete accord, 'my lief is faren in londe.'
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!'
And he answerde and seyde thus, 'madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By god, me mette I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning, doutelees.'
'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that god above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;
I can nat love a coward, by my feith.
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.
Swevenes engendren of repleccioums,
And ofte of fume, and of compleccioums,
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede *colera*, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek, and of whelpes grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes?
Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bemes,
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow;
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for goddes owene love!
Ye been ful colerik of complecciouu.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis,
Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow na-more.'
'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of your lore.

But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede.
By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of Ioye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.'
Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage,
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep;
Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now slawe;
Bihold my blody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte aresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;'
And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.
The hostiler answered him anon,
And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon,
As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'
This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and Iustice of this felonye: —
'My felawe mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.
I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!'
What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the middel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
O blisful god, that art so Iust and trewe!
Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre alway!
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatsom and abhominable
To god, that is so Iust and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be;
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anoon, ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,
That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse anoon,
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.
Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe nat, so have I Ioye or blis,)
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.
Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste.

And casten hem ful erly for to saille;
But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde,
And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.'
He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde him his viage for to lette;
As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and Iapes.
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,
God wot it reweth me; and have good day.'
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun he say.
His norice him exponned every del
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warning of thinges that men after seen.
And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde testament, of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhanged be?
Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
If thilke day he wente in-to bataille;
She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte nathelees,
But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
For they ben venimous, I woot it wel;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.
Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker as *In principio,*
*Mulier est hominis confusio;*
Madame, the sentence of this Latin is —
Womman is mannes Ioye and al his blis.
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
I am so ful of Ioye and of solas
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.'
And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
Him deyned not to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first maked man,
Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more;
And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo.
God woot that worldly Ioye is sone ago;
And if a rethor coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.

A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night thrugh-out the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
That in awayt liggen to mordre men.
O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flough fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.
Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercacioun
In this matere, and greet dispatisoun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,
As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,
Whether that goddes worthy forwiting
Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee);
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thing, or do it noght,
Though god forwoot it, er that it was wroght;
Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
But by necessitee condicionel.
I wol not han to do of swich matere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he had met the dreem, that I yow tolde.
Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;
Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
And made Adam fro paradys to go,
Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
But for I noot, to whom it mighte displese,
If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich matere,
And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
I can noon harm of no womman divyne.

Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,

Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
Song merier than the mermayde in the see;
For Phisiologus seith sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,
Amonġ the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.
For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst had seyn it with his yë.
This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
I am nat come your counseil for tespye;
But trewely, the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye singe.
For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boece, or any that can singe.
My lord your fader (god his soule blesse!)
And eek your moder, of hir gentilesse,
Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
As dide your fader in the morweninge;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his yën
He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,
He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee,
Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?'
This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravisshed with his flaterye.
Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos,
Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore,
The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?
(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,
And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,

Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage;
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my tale agayn: —
This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterten they anoon,
And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weylaway!
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges
So were they fered for berking of the dogges
And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.
They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle;
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*
Certes, he Iakke Straw, and his meynee,
Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras thay broghten bemes, and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
And therwithal thay shryked and they houped;
It semed as that heven sholde falle.
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle!
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.' —
The fox answerde, 'in feith, it shal be don,' —
And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,
And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, allas!
I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon trespas,
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe two,
And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yë.
For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!'
'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That Iangleth whan he sholde holde his pees.'
Lo, swich it is for to be reccheless,
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralitee, good men.
For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
Taketh the fruyt, and let the chaf be stille.
Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle good men;
And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

*Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale*

# EDMUND SPENSER

## THE FAERIE QUEENE

DISPOSED INTO TWELVE BOOKS,
FASHIONING

XII MORALL VERTUES

LONDON
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM PONSONBIE
1590

TO THE
MOST MIGHTIE AND
MAGNIFICENT EMPRESSE
ELIZABETH,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD,
QUEENE OF ENGLAND,
FRANCE AND IRELAND
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH &C.
HER MOST HUMBLE SERVANT:
ED. SPENSER

[Dedication of the edition of 1590.]

### THE FIRST BOOKE

OF THE FAERIE QUEENE
CONTAYNING
THE LEGEND OF THE KNIGHT
OF THE RED CROSSE
OR
OF HOLINESSE

I

Lo! I the man, whose Muse whylome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly shephards weeds,
Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine oaten reeds,
And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broade emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.

II

Helpe then, O holy virgin, chiefe of nyne,
Thy weaker novice to performe thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

III

And thou, most dreaded impe of highest Jove,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,
Lay now thy deadly heben bowe apart,
And with thy mother mylde come to mine ayde:
Come both, and with you bring triumphant Mart,
In loves and gentle jollities arraid,
After his murdrous spoyles and bloudie rage allayd.

IV

And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly bright,
Mirrour of grace and majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phœbus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile:
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest dread, a while.

## CANTO I

The patrone of true Holinesse
Foule Errour doth defeate:
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

I

A GENTLE knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many' a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

II

But on his brest a bloodie crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead as living ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
That greatest glorious queene of Faery Lond,
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave;
And ever as he rode his hart did earne
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stearne.

IV

A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low,
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw:
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow:
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had;
And by her in a line a milkewhite lambe she lad.

V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore,
And by descent from royall lynage came
Of ancient kinges and queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from east to westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held,
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld:
Whom to avenge, she had this knight from far compeld.

VI

Behind her farre away a dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain,
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand:
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr:
Faire harbour that them seemes, so in they entred ar.

VIII

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,

Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling pine, the cedar proud and tall,
The vine-propp elme, the poplar never dry,
The builder oake, sole king of forrests all,
The aspine good for staves, the cypresse funerall,

IX

The laurell, meed of mightie conquerours
And poets sage, the firre that weepeth still,
The willow worne of forlorne paramours,
The eugh obedient to the benders will,
The birch for shaftes, the sallow for the mill,
The mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,
The fruitfull olive, and the platane round,
The carver holme, the maple seeldom inward sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustring storme is overblowne;
When, weening to returne whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,
That makes them doubt, their wits be not their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.

XI

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about;
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave,
Amid the thickest woods. The champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gave.

XII

'Be well aware,' quoth then that ladie milde,
'Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts: oft fire is without smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your stroke,
Sir knight, with-hold, till further tryall made.'
'Ah, ladie,' sayd he, 'shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.'

XIII

'Yea, but,' quoth she, 'the perill of this place
I better wot then you; though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisedome warnes, whilest foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read beware.' 'Fly, fly!' quoth then
The fearefull dwarfe: 'this is no place for living men.'

XIV

But full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armor made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade,
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th' other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

XV

And as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes upwound,
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred

A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking upon her poisnous dugs, eachone
Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill favored:
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all
were gone.

XVI

Their dam upstart, out of her den effraide,
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile
About her cursed head, whose folds displaid
Were stretcht now forth at length without entraile.
She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle,
Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;
For light she hated as the deadly bale,
Ay wont in desert darknes to remaine,
Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

XVII

Which when the valiant Elfe perceiv'd, he lept
As lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce, her speckled taile advaunst,
Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay:
Who, nought aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst:
The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

XVIII

Much daunted with that dint, her sence was dazd,
Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered round,
And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd
With doubled forces high above the ground:
Tho, wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd,
Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine:
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine.

XIX

His lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, 'Now, now, sir knight, shew what ye bee:
Add faith unto your force, and be not faint:
Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee.'
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate for griefe and high disdaine;
And knitting all his force, got one hand free,
Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine,
That soone to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.

XX

Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw
A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe:
Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthie parbreake all the place defiled has.

XXI

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale,
His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But when his later spring gins to avale,
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherin there breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly femall, of his fruitful seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elswher may no man reed.

XXII

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no lenger fight.
Whose corage when the feend perceivd to shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke
Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small,

Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

XXIII

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west,
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best;
A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
That from their noyance he no where can rest,
But with his clownish hands their tender wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

XXIV

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame
Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;
And stroke at her with more then manly force,
That from her body, full of filthie sin,
He raft her hatefull heade without remorse:
A streame of cole black blood forth gushed from her corse.

XXV

Her scattred brood, soone as their parent deare
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,
Gathred themselves about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to have found
At her wide mouth: but being there withstood,
They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked up their dying mothers bloud,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.

XXVI

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th' unkindly impes, of heaven accurst,
Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloudy thurst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,
And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst!
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend;
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom he should contend.

XXVII

His lady, seeing all that chaunst, from farre,
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,
And saide, 'Faire knight, borne under happie starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye,
Well worthie be you of that armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may.'

XXVIII

Then mounted he upon his steede againe,
And with the lady backward sought to wend;
That path he kept which beaten was most plaine,
Ne ever would to any by way bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them brought.
So forward on his way (with God to frend)
He passed forth, and new adventure sought:
Long way he traveiled, before he heard of ought.

XXIX

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
An aged sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad,
And all the way he prayed as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

XXX

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was;
And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
'Ah! my dear sonne,' quoth he, 'how should, alas!
Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such thinges to mell.

XXXI

'But if of daunger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrie farre and neare.'
'Of such,' saide he, 'I chiefly doe inquere,
And shall you well rewarde to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare:
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a space.'

XXXII

'Far hence,' quoth he, 'in wastfull wildernesse,
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse.'
'Now,' saide the ladie, 'draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be: for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
The Sunne, that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the ocean waves emong.

XXXIII

'Then with the Sunne take, sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell best.'
'Right well, sir knight, ye have advised bin,'
Quoth then that aged man; 'the way to win
Is wisely to advise: now day is spent;
Therefore with me ye may take up your in
For this same night.' The knight was well content:
So with that godly father to his home they went.

XXXIV

A litle lowly hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In traveill to and froe: a litle wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,
Wherein the hermite dewly wont to say
His holy thinges each morne and even-tyde:
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

XXXV

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainement, where none was:
Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their will;
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas:
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas:
He told of saintes and popes, and evermore
He strowd an Ave-Mary after and before.

XXXVI

The drouping night thus creepeth on them fast,
And the sad humor loading their eye liddes,
As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast
Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep them biddes:
Unto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes:
Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,
He to his studie goes, and there amiddes
His magick bookes and artes of sundrie kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy minds.

XXXVII

Then choosing out few words most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame;

With which and other spelles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke Plutoes grisely dame,
And cursed heven, and spake reprochful shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light:
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon, prince of darknes and dead night,
At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to flight.

XXXVIII

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes dredd
Legions of sprights, the which, like litle flyes
Fluttring about his ever damned hedd,
Awaite whereto their service he applyes,
To aide his friendes, or fray his enimies:
Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes;
The one of them he gave a message too,
The other by him selfe staide, other worke to doo.

XXXIX

He, making speedy way through spersed ayre,
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
And low, where dawning day doth never peepe,
His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe
In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,
Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred.

XL

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
The one faire fram'd of burnisht yvory,
The other all with silver overcast;
And wakeful dogges before them farre doe lye,
Watching to banish Care their enimy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.
By them the sprite doth passe in quietly,
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deepe
In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.

XLI

And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
And ever drizling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swowne:
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t' annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard: but carelesse Quiet lyes,
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

XLII

The messenger approching to him spake,
But his waste wordes retourned to him in vaine:
So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,
Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

XLIII

The sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatned unto him the dreaded name
Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake,
And, lifting up his lompish head, with blame
Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.
'Hether,' quoth he, 'me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborne sprites can wisely tame;
He bids thee to him send for his intent
A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent.'

XLIV

The god obayde, and calling forth straight way
A diverse dreame out of his prison darke,
Delivered it to him, and downe did lay
His heavie head, devoide of careful carke;
Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.
He, backe returning by the yvorie dore,

Remounted up as light as chearefull larke,
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
In hast unto his lord, where he him left afore.

XLV

Who all this while, with charmes and hidden artes,
Had made a lady of that other spright,
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes,
So lively and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight:
The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight:
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una fit.

XLVI

Now when that ydle dreame was to him brought,
Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly, void of evil thought,
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as he him schooled privily:
And that new creature, borne without her dew,
Full of the makers guyle, with usage sly
He taught to imitate that lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned hew.

XLVII

Thus well instructed, to their worke they haste,
And comming where the knight in slomber lay,
The one upon his hardie head him plaste,
And made him dreame of loves and lustfull play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy.
Then seemed him his lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false winged boy
Her chaste hart had subdewd to learne Dame Pleasures toy.

XLVIII

And she her selfe, of beautie soveraigne queene,
Fayre Venus, seemde unto his bed to bring
Her, whom he, waking, evermore did weene
To bee the chastest flowre that aye did spring
On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose leman to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing
*Hymen iö Hymen*, dauncing all around,
Whylst freshest Flora her with yvie girlond crownd.

XLIX

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He started up, as seeming to mistrust
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo ! there before his face his ladie is,
Under blacke stole hyding her bayted hooke,
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and lovely looke,
Most like that virgin true, which for her knight him took.

L

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise,
He thought have slaine her in his fierce despight;
But hastie heat tempring with sufferance wise,
He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe advise
To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned truth.
Wringing her hands in wemens pitteous wise,
Tho can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth,
Both for her noble blood, and for her tender youth.

LI

And sayd, 'Ah sir, my liege lord and my love,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,
Or the blind god, that doth me thus amate,
For hoped love to winne me certaine hate?
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state
You, whom my hard avenging destinie
Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently.

LII

'Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leave
My fathers kingdom'—There she stopt with teares;

Her swollen hart her speech seemd to bereave;
And then againe begonne: 'My weaker yeares,
Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your fayth for succour and sure ayde:
Let me not die in languor and long teares.'
'Why, dame,' quoth he, 'what hath ye thus dismayd?
What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayd?'

LIII

'Love of your selfe,' she saide, 'and deare constraint,
Lets me not sleepe, but waste the wearie night
In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,
Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned quight.'
Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight
Suspect her truth: yet since no' untruth he knew,
Her fawning love with foule disdainefull spight
He would not shend, but said, 'Deare dame, I rew,
That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto you grew.

LIV

'Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
For all so deare as life is to my hart,
I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound;
Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,
Where cause is none, but to your rest depart.'
Not all content, yet seemd she to appease
Her mournefull plaintes, beguiled of her art,
And fed with words, that could not chose but please;
So slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.

LV

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much griev'd to thinke that gentle dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last dull wearines of former fight
Having yrockt a sleepe his irkesome spright,
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine
With bowres, and beds, and ladies deare delight:
But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformed spright he backe returnd againe.

## CANTO II

The guilefull great enchaunter parts
The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead faire Falshood steps,
And workes him woefull ruth.

I

By this the northerne wagoner had set
His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre,
That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To al that in the wide deepe wandring arre:
And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his roome did fill:

II

When those accursed messengers of hell,
That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged spright,
Came to their wicked maister, and gan tel
Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeeding night:
Who, all in rage to see his skilfull might
Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine
And sad Proserpines wrath, them to affright.
But when he saw his threatning was but vaine,
He cast about, and searcht his baleful bokes againe.

III

Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire,
And that false other spright, on whom he spred
A seeming body of the subtile aire,
Like a young squire, in loves and lustyhed
His wanton daies that ever loosely led,
Without regard of armes and dreaded fight:
Those twoo he tooke, and in a secrete bed,

Covered with darkenes and misdeeming night,
Them both together laid, to joy in vaine delight.

IV

Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull hast
Unto his guest, who, after troublous sights
And dreames, gan now to take more sound repast;
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearful frights,
As one aghast with feends or damned sprights,
And to him cals: 'Rise, rise, unhappy swaine,
That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked wights
Have knit themselves in Venus shameful chaine;
Come see, where your false lady doth her honor staine.'

V

All in amaze he suddenly up start
With sword in hand, and with the old man went;
Who soone him brought into a secret part,
Where that false couple were full closely ment
In wanton lust and leud enbracement:
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire,
The eie of reason was with rage yblent,
And would have slaine them in his furious ire,
But hardly was restreined of that aged sire.

VI

Retourning to his bed in torment great,
And bitter anguish of his guilty sight,
He could not rest, but did his stout heart eat,
And wast his inward gall with deepe despight,
Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring night.
At last faire Hesperus in highest skie
Had spent his lampe, and brought forth dawning light;
Then up he rose, and clad him hastily;
The dwarfe him brought his steed: so both away do fly.

VII

Now when the rosy fingred Morning faire,
Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed,
Had spred her purple robe through deawy aire,
And the high hils Titan discovered,
The royall virgin shooke of drousyhed,
And rising forth out of her baser bowre,
Lookt for her knight, who far away was fled,
And for her dwarfe, that wont to wait each howre:
Then gan she wail and weepe, to see that wceful stowre.

VIII

And after him she rode with so much speede,
As her slowe beast could make; but all in vaine:
For him so far had borne his light-foot steede,
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdaine,
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine;
Yet she her weary limbes would never rest,
But every hil and dale, each wood and plaine,
Did search, sore grieved in her gentle brest,
He so ungently left her, whome she loved best.

IX

But subtill Archimago, when his guests
He saw divided into double parts,
And Una wandring in woods and forrests,
Th' end of his drift, he praisd his divelish arts,
That had such might over true meaning harts:
Yet rests not so, but other meanes doth make,
How he may worke unto her further smarts:
For her he hated as the hissing snake,
And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.

X

He then devisde himselfe how to disguise;
For by his mighty science he could take
As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
As ever Proteus to himselfe could make:
Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,

That of himselfe he ofte for feare would quake,
And oft would flie away. O who can tell
The hidden powre of herbes, and might of magick spel?

XI

But now seemde best, the person to put on
Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:
In mighty armes he was yclad anon,
And silver shield; upon his coward brest
A bloody crosse, and on his craven crest
A bounch of heares discolourd diversly:
Full jolly knight he seemde, and wel addrest,
And when he sate uppon his courser free,
Saint George himselfe ye would have deemed him to be.

XII

But he, the knight whose semblaunt he did beare,
The true Saint George, was wandred far away,
Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare;
Will was his guide, and griefe led him astray.
At last him chaunst to meete upon the way
A faithlesse Sarazin, all armde to point,
In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
*Sans foy:* full large of limbe and every joint
He was, and cared not for God or man a point.

XIII

Hee had a faire companion of his way,
A goodly lady clad in scarlot red,
Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay;
And like a Persian mitre on her hed
Shee wore, with crowns and owches garnished,
The which her lavish lovers to her gave:
Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rung with golden bels and bosses brave.

XIV

With faire disport and courting dalliaunce
She intertainde her lover all the way:
But when she saw the knight his speare advaunce,
Shee soone left of her mirth and wanton play,
And bad her knight addresse him to the fray:
His foe was nigh at hand. He, prickte with pride
And hope to winne his ladies hearte that day,
Forth spurred fast: adowne his coursers side
The red bloud trickling staind the way, as he did ride.

XV

The Knight of the Redcrosse, when him he spide
Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous,
Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards ride:
Soone meete they both, both fell and furious,
That, daunted with theyr forces hideous,
Their steeds doe stagger, and amazed stand,
And eke themselves, too rudely rigorous,
Astonied with the stroke of their owne hand,
Doe backe rebutte, and ech to other yealdeth land.

XVI

As when two rams, stird with ambitious pride,
Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke,
Their horned fronts so fierce on either side
Doe meete, that, with the terror of the shocke
Astonied, both stand sencelesse as a blocke,
Forgetfull of the hanging victory:
So stood these twaine, unmoved as a rocke,
Both staring fierce, and holding idely
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

XVII

The Sarazin, sore daunted with the buffe,
Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies;
Who well it wards, and quyteth cuff with cuff:
Each others equall puissaunce envies,
And through their iron sides with cruell spies
Does seeke to perce: repining courage yields
No foote to foe. The flashing fier flies,
As from a forge, out of their burning shields,
And streams of purple bloud new dies the verdant fields.

XVIII

'Curse on that Crosse,' quoth then the Sarazin,
'That keepes thy body from the bitter fitt!
Dead long ygoe, I wote, thou haddest bin,
Had not that charme from thee forwarned itt:
But yet I warne thee now assured sitt,
And hide thy head.' Therewith upon his crest
With rigor so outrageous he smitt,
That a large share it hewd out of the rest,
And glauncing downe his shield, from blame him fairely blest.

XIX

Who thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark
Of native vertue gan eftsoones revive,
And at his haughty helmet making mark,
So hugely stroke, that it the steele did rive,
And cleft his head. He, tumbling downe alive,
With bloudy mouth his mother earth did kis,
Greeting his grave: his grudging ghost did strive
With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is,
Whether the soules doe fly of men that live amis.

XX

The lady, when she saw her champion fall,
Like the old ruines of a broken towre,
Staid not to waile his woefull funerall,
But from him fled away with all her powre;
Who after her as hastily gan scowre,
Bidding the dwarfe with him to bring away
The Sarazins shield, signe of the conqueroure.
Her soone he overtooke, and bad to stay,
For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

XXI

Shee, turning backe with ruefull countenaunce,
Cride, 'Mercy, mercy, sir, vouchsafe to showe
On silly dame, subject to hard mischaunce,
And to your mighty wil!' Her humblesse low,
In so ritch weedes and seeming glorious show,
Did much emmove his stout heroïcke heart,
And said, 'Deare dame, your suddein overthrow
Much rueth me; but now put feare apart,
And tel, both who ye be, and who that tooke your part.'

XXII

Melting in teares, then gan shee thus lament:
'The wreched woman, whom unhappy howre
Hath now made thrall to your commandement,
Before that angry heavens list to lowre,
And Fortune false betraide me to your powre,
Was, (O what now availeth that I was?)
Borne the sole daughter of an emperour,
He that the wide west under his rule has,
And high hath set his throne where Tiberis doth pas.

XXIII

'He, in the first flowre of my freshest age,
Betrothed me unto the onely haire
Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage;
Was never prince so faithfull and so faire,
Was never prince so meeke and debonaire;
But ere my hoped day of spousall shone,
My dearest lord fell from high honors staire,
Into the hands of hys accursed fone,
And cruelly was slaine, that shall I ever mone.

XXIV

'His blessed body, spoild of lively breath,
Was afterward, I know not how, convaid
And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death
When tidings came to mee, unhappy maid,
O how great sorrow my sad soule assaid!
Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,
And many yeares throughout the world I straid,
A virgin widow, whose deepe wounded mind
With love, long time did languish as the striken hind.

XXV

'At last it chaunced this proud Sarazin
To meete me wandring; who perforce me led
With him away, but yet could never win
The fort, that ladies hold in soveraigne dread.
There lies he now with foule dishonor dead,

Who, whiles he livde, was called proud Sansfoy:
The eldest of three brethren, all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sansjoy,
And twixt them both was born the bloudy bold Sansloy.

XXVI

'In this sad plight, friendlesse, unfortunate,
Now miserable I Fidessa dwell,
Craving of you, in pitty of my state,
To doe none ill, if please ye not doe well.'
He in great passion al this while did dwell,
More busying his quicke eies, her face to view,
Then his dull eares, to heare what shee did tell;
And said, 'Faire lady, hart of flint would rew
The undeserved woes and sorrowes which ye shew.

XXVII

'Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye rest,
Having both found a new friend you to aid,
And lost an old foe, that did you molest:
Better new friend then an old foe is said.'
With chaunge of chear the seeming simple maid
Let fal her eien, as shamefast, to the earth,
And yeelding soft, in that she nought gainsaid,
So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth,
And shee coy lookes: so dainty, they say, maketh derth.

XXVIII

Long time they thus together traveiled,
Til, weary of their way, they came at last
Where grew two goodly trees, that faire did spred
Their armes abroad, with gray mosse overcast,
And their greene leaves, trembling with every blast,
Made a calme shadowe far in compasse round:
The fearefull shepheard, often there aghast,
Under them never sat, ne wont there sound
His mery oaten pipe, but shund th' unlucky ground.

XXIX

But this good knight, soone as he them can spie,
For the coole shade him thither hastly got:
For golden Phoebus, now ymounted hie,
From fiery wheeles of his faire chariot
Hurled his beame so scorching cruell hot,
That living creature mote it not abide;
And his new lady it endured not.
There they alight, in hope themselves to hide
From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs a tide.

XXX

Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other makes,
With goodly purposes, there as they sit:
And in his falsed fancy he her takes
To be the fairest wight that lived yit;
Which to expresse, he bends his gentle wit,
And thinking of those braunches greene to frame
A girlond for her dainty forehead fit,
He pluckt a bough; out of whose rifte there came
Smal drops of gory bloud, that trickled down the same.

XXXI

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard,
Crying, 'O spare with guilty hands to teare
My tender sides in this rough rynd embard;
But fly, ah! fly far hence away, for feare
Least to you hap that happened to me heare,
And to this wretched lady, my deare love;
O too deare love, love bought with death too deare!'
Astond he stood, and up his heare did hove,
And with that suddein horror could no member move.

XXXII

At last, whenas the dreadfull passion
Was overpast, and manhood well awake,
Yet musing at the straunge occasion,
And doubting much his sence, he thus bespake:
'What voice of damned ghost from Limbo lake,
Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
Both which fraile men doe oftentimes mistake,
Sends to my doubtful eares these speaches rare,
And ruefull plaints, me bidding guiltlesse blood to spare?'

XXXIII

Then groning deep: 'Nor damned ghost,' quoth he,
'Nor guileful sprite to thee these words doth speake,
But once a man, Fradubio, now a tree;
Wretched man, wretched tree! whose nature weake
A cruell witch, her cursed will to wreake,
Hath thus transformd, and plast in open plaines,
Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleake,
And scorching sunne does dry my secret vaines:
For though a tree I seme, yet cold and heat me paines.'

XXXIV

'Say on, Fradubio, then, or man or tree,'
Quoth then the knight; 'by whose mischievous arts
Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see?
He oft finds med'cine who his griefe imparts;
But double griefs afflict concealing harts,
As raging flames who striveth to suppresse.'
'The author then,' said he, 'of all my smarts,
Is one Duessa, a false sorceresse,
That many errant knights hath broght to wretchednesse.

XXXV

'In prime of youthly yeares, when corage hott
The fire of love and joy of chevalree
First kindled in my brest, it was my lott
To love this gentle lady, whome ye see
Now not a lady, but a seeming tree;
With whome as once I rode accompanyde,
Me chaunced of a knight encountred bee,
That had a like faire lady by his syde;
Lyke a faire lady, but did fowle Duessa hyde.

XXXVI

'Whose forged beauty he did take in hand
All other dames to have exceded farre;
I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
Mine, that did then shine as the morning starre:
So both to batteill fierce arraunged arre;
In which his harder fortune was to fall
Under my speare: such is the dye of warre:
His lady, left as a prise martiall,
Did yield her comely person, to be at my call.

XXXVII

'So doubly lov'd of ladies unlike faire,
Th' one seeming such, the other such indeede,
One day in doubt I cast for to compare,
Whether in beauties glorie did exceede;
A rosy girlond was the victors meede.
Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee,
So hard the discord was to be agreede:
Frælissa was as faire as faire mote bee,
And ever false Duessa seemde as faire as shee.

XXXVIII

'The wicked witch, now seeing all this while
The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway,
What not by right, she cast to win by guile;
And by her hellish science raisd streight way
A foggy mist, that overcast the day,
And a dull blast, that, breathing on her face,
Dimmed her former beauties shining ray,
And with foule ugly forme did her disgrace:
Then was she fayre alone, when none was faire in place.

XXXIX

'Then cride she out, "Fye, fye! deformed wight,
Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine
To have before bewitched all mens sight;
O leave her soone, or let her soone be slaine."
Her loathly visage viewing with disdaine,
Eftsoones I thought her such as she me told,
And would have kild her; but with faigned paine
The false witch did my wrathfull hand with-hold:
So left her, where she now is turnd to treen mould.

XL

'Thensforth I tooke Duessa for my dame,
And in the witch unweeting joyd long time,
Ne ever wist but that she was the same:
Till on a day (that day is everie prime,
When witches wont do penance for their crime)
I chaunst to see her in her proper hew,
Bathing her selfe in origane and thyme:

A filthy foule old woman I did vew,
That ever to have toucht her I did deadly rew.

XLI

'Her neather partes misshapen, monstruous,
Were hidd in water, that I could not see,
But they did seeme more foule and hideous,
Then womans shape man would beleeve to bee.
Thensforth from her most beastly companie
I gan refraine, in minde to slipp away,
Soone as appeard safe opportunitie:
For danger great, if not assurd decay,
I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne to stray.

XLII

'The divelish hag, by chaunges of my cheare,
Perceiv'd my thought; and drownd in sleepie night,
With wicked herbes and oyntments did besmeare
My body all, through charmes and magicke might,
That all my senses were bereaved quight:
Then brought she me into this desert waste,
And by my wretched lovers side me pight,
Where now enclosd in wooden wals full faste,
Banisht from living wights, our wearie daies we waste.'

XLIII

'But how long time,' said then the Elfin knight,
'Are you in this misformed hous to dwell?'
'We may not chaunge,' quoth he, 'this evill plight
Till we be bathed in a living well;
That is the terme prescribed by the spell.'
'O how,' sayd he, 'mote I that well out find,
That may restore you to your wonted well?'
'Time and suffised fates to former kynd
Shall us restore; none else from hence may us unbynd.'

XLIV

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,
Heard how in vaine Fradubio did lament,
And knew well all was true. But the good knight
Full of sad feare and ghastly dreriment,
When all this speech the living tree had spent,
The bleeding bough did thrust into the ground,
That from the blood he might be innocent,
And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound:
Then turning to his lady, dead with feare her fownd.

XLV

Her seeming dead he fownd with feigned feare,
As all unweeting of that well she knew,
And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare
Her out of carelesse swowne. Her eylids blew,
And dimmed sight, with pale and deadly hew,
At last she up gan lift: with trembling cheare
Her up he tooke, too simple and too trew,
And oft her kist. At length, all passed feare
He set her on her steede, and forward forth did beare.

## CANTO III

Forsaken Truth long seekes her love,
And makes the lyon mylde,
Marres Blind Devotions mart, and fals
In hand of leachour vylde.

I

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse,
That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretchednesse
Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes unkind:
I, whether lately through her brightnes blynd,
Or through alleageance and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankynd,
Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

II

And now it is empassioned so deepe,
For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
That my frayle eies these lines with teares do steepe,
To thinke how she through guyleful handeling,

Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,
Though faire as ever living wight was fayre,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorced in despayre,
And her dew loves deryv'd to that vile witches shayre.

III

Yet she, most faithfull ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd,
Far from all peoples preace, as in exile,
In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd,
To seeke her knight; who, subtily betrayd
Through that late vision which th' enchaunter wrought,
Had her abandond. She, of nought affrayd,
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought;
Yet wished tydinges none of him unto her brought.

IV

One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight,
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight:
From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
And layd her stole aside. Her angels face
As the great eye of heaven shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

V

It fortuned, out of the thickest wood
A ramping lyon rushed suddeinly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood:
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devourd her tender corse;
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse,
And with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

VI

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weet.
O how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!
Whose yielded pryde and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion,
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

VII

'The lyon, lord of everie beast in field,'
Quoth she, 'his princely puissance doth abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:
But he, my lyon, and my noble lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her that him lov'd, and ever most adord
As the god of my life? why hath he me abhord?'

VIII

Redounding teares did choke th' end of her plaint,
Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood;
And sad to see her sorrowfull constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood;
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.
At last, in close hart shutting up her payne,
Arose the virgin borne of heavenly brood,
And to her snowy palfrey got agayne,
To seeke her strayed champion if she might attayne.

IX

The lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward,
And when she wakt, he wayted diligent,
With humble service to her will prepard:
From her fayre eyes he tooke commandement,
And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

X

Long she thus traveiled through deserts wyde,
By which she thought her wandring knight shold pas,
Yet never shew of living wight espyde;
Till that at length she found the troden gras,
In which the tract of peoples footing was,

Under the steepe foot of a mountaine hore:
The same she followes, till at last she has
A damzell spyde slow footing her before,
That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.

XI

To whom approching, she to her gan call,
To weet if dwelling place were nigh at hand;
But the rude wench her answerd nought at all;
She could not heare, nor speake, nor understand;
Till, seeing by her side the lyon stand,
With suddeine feare her pitcher downe she threw,
And fled away: for never in that land
Face of fayre lady she before did vew,
And that dredd lyons looke her cast in deadly hew.

XII

Full fast she fled, ne ever lookt behynd,
As if her life upon the wager lay,
And home she came, whereas her mother blynd
Sate in eternall night: nought could she say,
But, suddeine catching hold, did her dismay
With quaking hands, and other signes of feare:
Who, full of ghastly fright and cold affray,
Gan shut the dore. By this arrived there
Dame Una, weary dame, and entrance did requere.

XIII

Which when none yielded, her unruly page
With his rude clawes the wicket open rent,
And let her in; where, of his cruell rage
Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonishment,
Shee found them both in darkesome corner pent;
Where that old woman day and night did pray
Upon her beads, devoutly penitent:
Nine hundred *Pater nosters* every day,
And thrise nine hundred *Aves*, she was wont to say.

XIV

And to augment her painefull penaunce more,
Thrise every weeke in ashes shee did sitt,
And next her wrinkled skin rough sackecloth wore,
And thrise three times did fast from any bitt:
But now for feare her beads she did forgett.
Whose needelesse dread for to remove away,
Faire Una framed words and count'naunce fitt:
Which hardly doen, at length she gan them pray
That in their cotage small that night she rest her may.

XV

The day is spent, and commeth drowsie night,
When every creature shrowded is in sleepe:
Sad Una downe her laies in weary plight,
And at her feete the lyon watch doth keepe:
In stead of rest, she does lament, and weepe
For the late losse of her deare loved knight,
And sighes, and grones, and evermore doeth steepe
Her tender brest in bitter teares all night;
All night she thinks too long, and often lookes for light.

XVI

Now when Aldeboran was mounted hye
Above the shinie Cassiopeias chaire,
And all in deadly sleepe did drowned lye,
One knocked at the dore, and in would fare;
He knocked fast, and often curst, and sware,
That ready entraunce was not at his call:
For on his backe a heavy load he bare
Of nightly stelths and pillage severall,
Which he had got abroad by purchas criminall.

XVII

He was, to weete, a stout and sturdy thiefe,
Wont to robbe churches of their ornaments,
And poore mens boxes of their due reliefe,
Which given was to them for good intents;
The holy saints of their rich vestiments
He did disrobe, when all men carelesse slept,
And spoild the priests of their habiliments;
Whiles none the holy things in safety kept,
Then he by conning sleights in at the window crept.

XVIII

And all that he by right or wrong could find
Unto this house he brought, and did bestow

Upon the daughter of this woman blind,
Abessa, daughter of Corceca slow,
With whom he whoredome usd, that few did know,
And fed her fatt with feast of offerings,
And plenty, which in all the land did grow;
Ne spared he to give her gold and rings:
And now he to her brought part of his stolen things.

XIX

Thus, long the dore with rage and threats he bett,
Yet of those fearfull women none durst rize,
(The lyon frayed them,) him in to lett:
He would no lenger stay him to advize,
But open breakes the dore in furious wize,
And entring is; when that disdainfull beast,
Encountring fierce, him suddein doth surprize,
And seizing cruell clawes on trembling brest,
Under his lordly foot him proudly hath supprest.

XX

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call,
His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand;
Who streight him rent in thousand peeces small,
And quite dismembred hath: the thirsty land
Dronke up his life; his corse left on the strand.
His fearefull freends weare out the wofull night,
Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to understand
The heavie hap which on them is alight;
Affraid, least to themselves the like mishappen might.

XXI

Now when broad day the world discovered has,
Up Una rose, up rose the lyon eke,
And on their former journey forward pas,
In waies unknowne, her wandring knight to seeke,
With paines far passing that long wandring Greeke,
That for his love refused deitye;
Such were the labours of this lady meeke,
Still seeking him, that from her still did flye;
Then furthest from her hope, when most she weened nye.

XXII

Soone as she parted thence, the fearfull twayne,
That blind old woman and her daughter dear,
Came forth, and finding Kirkrapine there slayne,
For anguish great they gan to rend their heare,
And beat their brests, and naked flesh to teare.
And when they both had wept and wayld their fill,
Then forth they ran like two amazed deare,
Halfe mad through malice and revenging will,
To follow her, that was the causer of their ill.

XXIII

Whome overtaking, they gan loudly bray,
With hollow houling and lamenting cry,
Shamefully at her rayling all the way,
And her accusing of dishonesty,
That was the flowre of faith and chastity;
And still, amidst her rayling, she did pray
That plagues, and mischiefes, and long misery
Might fall on her, and follow all the way,
And that in endlesse error she might ever stray.

XXIV

But when she saw her prayers nought prevaile,
Shee backe retourned with some labour lost;
And in the way, as shee did weepe and waile,
A knight her mett in mighty armes embost,
Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost,
But subtill Archimag, that Una sought
By traynes into new troubles to have toste:
Of that old woman tidings he besought,
If that of such a lady shee could tellen ought.

XXV

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her heare,
Saying, that harlott she too lately knew,
That causd her shed so many a bitter teare,
And so forth told the story of her feare.
Much seemed he to mone her haplesse chaunce,
And after for that lady did inquere;

Which being taught, he forward gan advaunce
His fair enchaunted steed, and eke his charmed launce.

XXVI

Ere long he came where Una traveild slow,
And that wilde champion wayting her besyde:
Whome seeing such, for dread hee durst not show
Him selfe too nigh at hand, but turned wyde
Unto an hil; from whence when she him spyde,
By his like seeming shield her knight by name
Shee weend it was, and towards him gan ride:
Approching nigh, she wist it was the same,
And with faire fearefull humblesse towards him shee came;

XXVII

And weeping said, 'Ah! my long lacked lord,
Where have ye bene thus long out of my sight?
Much feared I to have bene quite abhord,
Or ought have done, that ye displeasen might,
That should as death unto my deare heart light:
For since mine eie your joyous sight did mis,
My chearefull day is turnd to chearelesse night,
And eke my night of death the shadow is;
But welcome now, my light, and shining lampe of blis.'

XXVIII

He thereto meeting said, 'My dearest dame,
Far be it from your thought, and fro my wil,
To thinke that knighthood I so much should shame,
As you to leave, that have me loved stil,
And chose in Faery court, of meere goodwil,
Where noblest knights were to be found on earth:
The earth shall sooner leave her kindly skil
To bring forth fruit, and make eternall derth,
Then I leave you, my liefe, yborn of hevenly berth.

XXIX

'And sooth to say, why I lefte you so long,
Was for to seeke adventure in straunge place,
Where Archimago said a felon strong
To many knights did daily worke disgrace;
But knight he now shall never more deface:
Good cause of mine excuse, that mote ye please
Well to accept, and ever more embrace
My faithfull service, that by land and seas
Have vowd you to defend. Now then your plaint appease.'

XXX

His lovely words her seemd due recompence
Of all her passed paines: one loving howre
For many yeares of sorrow can dispence:
A dram of sweete is worth a pound of sowre:
Shee has forgott how many a woeful stowre
For him she late endurd; she speakes no more
Of past: true is, that true love hath no powre
To looken backe; his eies be fixt before.
Before her stands her knight, for whom she toyld so sore.

XXXI

Much like as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wandred in the ocean wide,
Ofte soust in swelling Tethys saltish teare,
And long time having tand his tawney hide
With blustring breath of heaven, that none can bide,
And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound,
Soone as the port from far he has espide,
His chearfull whistle merily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates him pledg around.

XXXII

Such joy made Una, when her knight she found;
And eke th' enchaunter joyous seemde no lesse

Then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground
His ship far come from watrie wildernesse;
He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth blesse.
So forth they past, and all the way they spent
Discoursing of her dreadful late distresse,
In which he askt her, what the lyon ment:
Who told her all that fell in journey, as she went.

XXXIII

They had not ridden far, when they might see
One pricking towards them with hastie heat,
Full strongly armd, and on a courser free,
That through his fiersnesse fomed all with sweat,
And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side;
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat
Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde;
And on his shield *Sans loy* in bloody lines was dyde.

XXXIV

When nigh he drew unto this gentle payre,
And saw the red-crosse, which the knight did beare,
He burnt in fire, and gan eftsoones prepare
Himselfe to batteill with his couched speare.
Loth was that other, and did faint through feare,
To taste th' untryed dint of deadly steele;
But yet his lady did so well him cheare,
That hope of new good hap he gan to feele;
So bent his speare, and spurd his horse with yron heele.

XXXV

But that proud Paynim forward came so ferce
And full of wrath, that with his sharphead speare
Through vainly crossed shield he quite did perce;
And had his staggering steed not shronke for feare,
Through shield and body eke he should him beare:
Yet so great was the puissance of his push,
That from his sadle quite he did him beare:
He, tombling rudely downe, to ground did rush,
And from his gored wound a well of bloud did gush.

XXXVI

Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed,
He to him lept, in minde to reave his life,
And proudly said: 'Lo there the worthie meed
Of him that slew Sansfoy with bloody knife!
Henceforth his ghost, freed from repining strife,
In peace may passen over Lethe lake,
When mourning altars, purgd with enimies life,
The black infernall Furies doen aslake:
Life from Sansfoy thou tookst, Sansloy shall from thee take.'

XXXVII

Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace,
Till Una cride, 'O hold that heavie hand,
Deare sir, what ever that thou be in place!
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand
Now at thy mercy: mercy not withstand:
For he is one the truest knight alive,
Though conquered now he lye on lowly land,
And whilest him fortune favourd, fayre did thrive
In bloudy field: therefore of life him not deprive.'

XXXVIII

Her piteous wordes might notabate his rage,
But, rudely rending up his helmet, would
Have slayne him streight: but when he sees his age,
And hoarie head of Archimago old,
His hasty hand he doth amased hold,
And, halfe ashamed, wondred at the sight:
For that old man well knew he, though untold,
In charmes and magick to have wondrous might;
Ne ever wont in field, ne in round lists, to fight.

XXXIX

And said, 'Why, Archimago, lucklesse syre,
What doe I see? what hard mishap is this,
That hath thee hether brought to taste mine yre?
Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,

In stead of foe to wound my friend amis?'
He answered nought, but in a traunce still lay,
And on those guilefull dazed eyes of his
The cloude of death did sit. Which doen away,
He left him lying so, ne would no lenger stay;

XL

But to the virgin comes; who all this while
Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see
By him, who has the guerdon of his guile,
For so misfeigning her true knight to bee:
Yet is she now in more perplexitie,
Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold,
From whom her booteth not at all to flie;
Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold,
Her from her palfrey pluckt, her visage to behold.

XLI

But her fiers servant, full of kingly aw
And high disdaine, whenas his soveraine dame
So rudely handled by her foe he saw,
With gaping jawes full greedy at him came,
And, ramping on his shield, did weene the same
Have reft away with his sharp rending clawes:
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
His corage more, that from his griping pawes
He hath his shield redeemd, and forth his swerd he drawes.

XLII

O then too weake and feeble was the forse
Of salvage beast, his puissance to withstand:
For he was strong, and of so mightie corse,
As ever wielded speare in warlike hand,
And feates of armes did wisely understand.
Eftsoones he perced through his chaufed chest
With thrilling point of deadly yron brand,
And launcht his lordly hart: with death opprest
He ror'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his stubborne brest.

XLIII

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid
From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will?
Her faithfull gard remov'd, her hope dismaid,
Her selfe a yielded pray to save or spill.
He now, lord of the field, his pride to fill,
With foule reproches and disdaineful spight
Her vildly entertaines, and, will or nill,
Beares her away upon his courser light:
Her prayers nought prevaile; his rage is more of might.

XLIV

And all the way, with great lamenting paine,
And piteous plaintes, she filleth his dull eares,
That stony hart could riven have in twaine,
And all the way she wetts with flowing teares:
But he, enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.
Her servile beast yet would not leave her so,
But followes her far of, ne ought he feares,
To be partaker of her wandring woe.
More mild, in beastly kind, then that her beastly foe.

## CANTO IV

To sinfull Hous of Pryde Duessa
Guydes the faithfull knight,
Where, brothers death to wreak, Sansjoy
Doth chaleng him to fight

I

YOUNG knight what ever, that dost armes professe,
And through long labours huntest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
In choice, and chaunge, of thy deare loved dame,
Least thou of her believe too lightly blame,
And rash misweening doe thy hart remove:
For unto knight there is no greater shame,
Then lightnesse and inconstancie in love:
That doth this Redcrosse Knights ensample plainly prove.

II

Who, after that he had faire Una lorne,
Through light misdeeming of her loialtie,
And false Duessa in her sted had borne,
Called Fidess', and so supposd to be,
Long with her traveild, till at last they see
A goodly building, bravely garnished;
The house of mightie prince it seemd to be;

And towards it a broad high way that led,
All bare through peoples feet, which thether traveiled.

III

Great troupes of people traveild thetherward
Both day and night, of each degree and place;
But few returned, having scaped hard,
With balefull beggery, or foule disgrace;
Which ever after in most wretched case,
Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay.
Thether Duessa badd him bend his pace:
For she is wearie of the toilsom way,
And also nigh consumed is the lingring day.

IV

A stately pallace built of squared bricke,
Which cunningly was without morter laid,
Whose wals were high, but nothing strong nor thick,
And golden foile all over them displaid,
That purest skye with brightnesse they dismaid:
High lifted up were many loftie towres,
And goodly galleries far over laid,
Full of faire windowes and delightful bowres;
And on the top a diall told the timely howres.

V

It was a goodly heape for to behould,
And spake the praises of the workmans witt;
But full great pittie, that so faire a mould
Did on so weake foundation ever sitt:
For on a sandie hill, that still did flitt
And fall away, it mounted was full hie,
That every breath of heaven shaked itt;
And all the hinder partes, that few could spie,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

VI

Arrived there, they passed in forth right;
For still to all the gates stood open wide:
Yet charge of them was to a porter hight,
Cald Malvenù, who entrance none denide:
Thence to the hall, which was on every side
With rich array and costly arras dight:
Infinite sortes of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wished sight
Of her, that was the lady of that pallace bright.

VII

By them they passe, all gazing on them round,
And to the presence mount; whose glorious vew
Their frayle amazed senses did confound:
In living princes court none ever knew
Such endlesse richesse, and so sumpteous shew;
Ne Persia selfe, the nourse of pompous pride,
Like ever saw. And there a noble crew
Of lords and ladies stood on every side,
Which, with their presence fayre the place much beautifide.

VIII

High above all a cloth of state was spred,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,
On which there sate, most brave embellished
With royall robes and gorgeous array,
A mayden queene, that shone as Titans ray,
In glistring gold and perelesse pretious stone;
Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay
To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne,
As envying her selfe, that too exceeding shone:

IX

Exceeding shone, like Phœbus fayrest childe,
That did presume his fathers fyrie wayne,
And flaming mouthes of steedes unwonted wilde,
Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rayne:
Proud of such glory and advancement vayne,
While flashing beames do daze his feeble eyen,
He leaves the welkin way most beaten playne,
And, rapt with whirling wheeles, inflames the skyen
With fire not made to burne, but fayrely for to shyne.

X

So proud she shyned in her princely state,
Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdayne,
And sitting high, for lowly she did hate:
Lo! underneath her scornefull feete, was layne

A dreadfull dragon with an hideous trayne,
And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright,
Wherein her face she often vewed fayne,
And in her selfe-lov'd semblance tooke delight;
For she was wondrous faire, as any living wight.

XI

Of griesly Pluto she the daughter was,
And sad Proserpina, the queene of hell;
Yet did she thinke her pearelesse worth to pas
That parentage, with pride so did she swell,
And thundring Jove, that high in heaven doth dwell,
And wield the world, she claymed for her syre,
Or if that any else did Jove excell:
For to the highest she did still aspyre,
Or, if ought higher were then that, did it desyre.

XII

And proud Lucifera men did her call,
That made her selfe a queene, and crownd to be;
Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all,
Ne heritage of native soveraintie,
But did usurpe with wrong and tyrannie
Upon the scepter, which she now did hold:
Ne ruld her realme with lawes, but pollicie,
And strong advizement of six wisards old,
That with their counsels bad her kingdome did uphold.

XIII

Soone as the Elfin knight in presence came,
And false Duessa, seeming lady fayre,
A gentle husher, Vanitie by name,
Made rowme, and passage for them did prepaire:
So goodly brought them to the lowest stayre
Of her high throne, where they, on humble knee
Making obeysaunce, did the cause declare,
Why they were come, her roiall state to see,
To prove the wide report of her great majestee.

XIV

With loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so lowe,
She thancked them in her disdainefull wise,
Ne other grace vouchsafed them to showe
Of princesse worthy; scarse them bad arise.
Her lordes and ladies all this while devise
Themselves to setten forth to straungers sight:
Some frounce their curled heare in courtly guise,
Some prancke their ruffes, and others trimly dight
Their gay attyre: each others greater pride does spight.

XV

Goodly they all that knight doe entertayne,
Right glad with him to have increast their crew;
But to Duess' each one himselfe did payne
All kindnesse and faire courtesie to shew;
For in that court whylome her well they knew:
Yet the stout Faery mongst the middest crowd
Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly vew,
And that great princesse too exceeding prowd,
That to strange knight no better countenance allowd.

XVI

Suddein upriseth from her stately place
The roiall dame, and for her coche doth call:
All hurtlen forth, and she, with princely pace,
As faire Aurora, in her purple pall,
Out of the east the dawning day doth call,
So forth she comes: her brightnes brode doth blaze:
The heapes of people, thronging in the hall,
Doe ride each other, upon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitterand light doth all mens eies amaze.

XVII

So forth she comes, and to her coche does clyme,
Adorned all with gold and girlonds gay,
That seemd as fresh as Flora in her prime,
And strove to match, in roiall rich array,
Great Junoes golden chayre, the which, they say,
The gods stand gazing on, when she does ride
To Joves high hous through heavens brasen way,

Drawne of fayre pecocks, that excell in pride,
And full of Argus eyes their tayles dispredden wide.

XVIII

But this was drawne of six unequall beasts,
On which her six sage counsellours did ryde,
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kindes applyde:
Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
Was sluggish Idlenesse, the nourse of sin;
Upon a slouthfull asse he chose to ryde,
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin,
Like to an holy monck, the service to begin.

XIX

And in his hand his portesse still he bare,
That much was worne, but therein little redd;
For of devotion he had little care,
Still drownd in sleepe, and most of his daies dedd:
Scarse could he once uphold his heavie hedd,
To looken whether it were night or day:
May seeme the wayne was very evill ledd,
When such an one had guiding of the way,
That knew not whether right he went, or else astray.

XX

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne,
And greatly shunned manly exercise;
From everie worke he chalenged essoyne,
For contemplation sake: yet otherwise
His life he led in lawlesse riotise;
By which he grew to grievous malady;
For in his lustlesse limbs, through evill guise,
A shaking fever raignd continually.
Such one was Idlenesse, first of this company.

XXI

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne:
His belly was upblowne with luxury,
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne;
And like a crane his necke was long and fyne,
With which he swallowd up excessive feast,
For want whereof poore people oft did pyne:
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued up his gorge, that all did him deteast.

XXII

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly clad;
For other clothes he could not weare for heat;
And on his head an yvie girland had,
From under which fast trickled downe the sweat:
Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did beare a bouzing can,
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
His dronken corse he scarse upholden can:
In shape and life more like a monster then a man.

XXIII

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke unhable once to stirre or go;
Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned so,
That from his frend he seeldome knew his fo:
Full of diseases was his carcas blew,
And a dry dropsie through his flesh did flow,
Which by misdiet daily greater grew.
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

XXIV

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery
Upon a bearded gote, whose rugged heare,
And whally eies (the signe of gelosy,)
Was like the person selfe, whom he did beare:
Who rough, and blacke, and filthy, did appeare,
Unseemely man to please faire ladies eye;
Yet he of ladies oft was loved deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by:
O who does know the bent of womens fantasy?

XXV

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire,
Which underneath did hide his filthinesse;
And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
Full of vaine follies and new fanglenesse;

For he was false, and fraught with ficklenesse,
And learned had to love with secret lookes,
And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulnesse,
And fortunes tell, and read in loving bookes,
And thousand other waies, to bait his fleshly hookes.

XXVI

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw,
And lusted after all that he did love;
Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
But joyd weake wemens hearts to tempt, and prove
If from their loyall loves he might them move;
Which lewdnes fild him with reprochfull pain
Of that foule evill, which all men reprove,
That rotts the marrow, and consumes the braine.
Such one was Lechery, the third of all this traine.

XXVII

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon a camell loaden all with gold:
Two iron coffers hong on either side,
With precious metall full as they might hold,
And in his lap an heap of coine he told;
For of his wicked pelfe his god he made,
And unto hell him selfe for money sold:
Accursed usury was all his trade;
And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.

XXVIII

His life was nigh unto deaths dore yplaste;
And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes, hee ware,
Ne scarse good morsell all his life did taste,
But both from backe and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags, and richesse to compare;
Yet childe ne kinsman living had he none
To leave them to; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
He led a wretched life, unto him selfe unknowne.

XXIX

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffise,
Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store,
Whose need had end, but no end covetise,
Whose welth was want, whose plenty made him pore,
Who had enough, yett wished ever more,
A vile disease; and eke in foote and hand
A grievous gout tormented him full sore,
That well he could not touch, nor goe, nor stand.
Such one was Avarice, the forth of this faire band.

XXX

And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Betweene his cankred teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his chaw;
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw
At neibors welth, that made him ever sad;
For death it was, when any good he saw;
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had;
But when he heard of harme, he wexed wondrous glad.

XXXI

All in a kirtle of discolourd say
He clothed was, ypaynted full of eies;
And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull snake, the which his taile uptyes
In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.
Still as he rode, he gnasht his teeth, to see
Those heapes of gold with griple Covetyse;
And grudged at the great felicitee
Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companee.

XXXII

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds,
And him no lesse, that any like did use;
And who with gratious bread the hungry feeds,
His almes for want of faith he doth accuse;
So every good to bad he doth abuse:
And eke the verse of famous poets witt
He does backebite, and spightfull poison spues
From leprous mouth on all that ever writt.
Such one vile Envy was, that fifte in row did sitt.

XXXIII

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath,
Upon a lion, loth for to be led;

And in his hand a burning brond he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his hed:
His eies did hurle forth sparcles fiery red,
And stared sterne on all that him beheld:
As ashes pale of hew, and seeming ded;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage, when choler in him sweld.

XXXIV

His ruffin raiment all was staind with blood,
Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent,
Through unadvized rashnes woxen wood;
For of his hands he had no governement,
Ne car'd for blood in his avengement:
But when the furious fitt was overpast,
His cruell facts he often would repent;
Yet, wilfull man, he never would forecast,
How many mischieves should ensue his heedlesse hast.

XXXV

Full many mischiefes follow cruell Wrath;
Abhorred bloodshed, and tumultuous strife,
Unmanly murder, and unthrifty scath,
Bitter despight, with rancours rusty knife,
And fretting griefe, the enemy of life:
All these, and many evils moe haunt Ire;
The swelling splene, and frenzy raging rife,
The shaking palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire.
Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly tire.

XXXVI

And after all, upon the wagon beame,
Rode Sathan, with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesy teme,
So oft as Slowth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs of people did about them band,
Showting for joy; and still before their way
A foggy mist had covered all the land;
And underneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead sculls and bones of men, whose life had gone astray.

XXXVII

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open aire,
And in fresh flowring fields themselves to sport.
Emongst the rest rode that false lady faire,
The foule Duessa, next unto the chaire
Of proud Lucifer', as one of the traine:
But that good knight would not so nigh repaire,
Him selfe estraunging from their joyaunce vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far unfitt for warlike swaine.

XXXVIII

So having solaced themselves a space,
With pleasaunce of the breathing fields yfed,
They backe retourned to the princely place;
Whereas an errant knight, in armes ycled,
And heathnish shield, wherein with letters red
Was writt *Sans joy*, they new arrived find:
Enflam'd with fury and fiers hardyhed,
He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts unkind,
And nourish bloody vengeaunce in his bitter mind.

XXXIX

Who, when the shamed shield of slaine Sansfoy
He spide with that same Fary champions page,
Bewraying him that did of late destroy
His eldest brother, burning all with rage,
He to him lept, and that same envious gage
Of victors glory from him snacht away:
But th' Elfin knight, which ought that warlike wage,
Disdaind to loose the meed he wonne in fray,
And him rencountring fierce, reskewd the noble pray.

XL

Therewith they gan to hurtlen greedily,
Redoubted battaile ready to darrayne,
And clash their shields, and shake their swerds on hy,
That with their sturre they troubled all the traine;
Till that great queene, upon eternall paine
Of high displeasure, that ensewen might,
Commaunded them their fury to refraine,
And if that either to that shield had right,
In equall lists they should the morrow next it fight.

XLI

'Ah! dearest dame,' quoth then the Paynim bold,
'Pardon the error of enraged wight,

Whome great griefe made forgett the raines to hold
Of reasons rule, to see this recreaunt knight,
No knight, but treachour full of false despight
And shameful treason, who through guile hath slayn
The prowest knight that ever field did fight,
Even stout Sansfoy, (O who can then refrayn?)
Whose shield he beares renverst, the more to heap disdayn.

XLII

'And to augment the glorie of his guile,
His dearest love, the faire Fidessa, loe!
Is there possessed of the traytour vile,
Who reapes the harvest sowen by his foe,
Sowen in bloodie field, and bought with woe:
That brothers hand shall dearely well requight,
So be, O Queene, you equall favour showe.'
Him litle answerd th' angry Elfin knight;
He never meant with words, but swords, to plead his right:

XLIII

But threw his gauntlet as a sacred pledg,
His cause in combat the next day to try:
So been they parted both, with harts on edg
To be aveng'd each on his enimy.
That night they pas in joy and jollity,
Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall;
For steward was excessive Gluttony,
That of his plenty poured forth to all;
Which doen, the chamberlain Slowth did to rest them call.

XLIV

Now whenas darkesome Night had all displayd
Her coleblacke curtein over brightest skye,
The warlike youthes, on dayntie couches layd,
Did chace away sweet sleepe from sluggish eye,
To muse on meanes of hoped victory.
But whenas Morpheus had with leaden mace
Arrested all that courtly company,
Uprose Duessa from her resting place,
And to the Paynims lodging comes with silent pace.

XLV

Whom broad awake she findes, in troublous fitt,
Forecasting, how his foe he might annoy,
And him amoves with speaches seeming fitt:
'Ah deare Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy,
Cause of my new griefe, cause of my new joy,
Joyous, to see his ymage in mine eye,
And greevd, to thinke how foe did him destroy,
That was the flowre of grace and chevalrye;
Lo! his Fidessa, to thy secret faith I flye.'

XLVI

With gentle wordes he can her fayrely greet,
And bad say on the secrete of her hart.
Then, sighing soft, 'I learne that litle sweet
Oft tempred is,' quoth she, 'with muchell smart:
For since my brest was launcht with lovely dart
Of deare Sansfoy, I never joyed howre,
But in eternall woes my weaker hart
Have wasted, loving him with all my powre,
And for his sake have felt full many an heavie stowre.

XLVII

'At last, when perils all I weened past,
And hop'd to reape the crop of all my care,
Into new woes unweeting I was cast
By this false faytor, who unworthie ware
His worthie shield, whom he with guilefull snare
Entrapped slew, and brought to shamefull grave.
Me, silly maid, away with him he bare,
And ever since hath kept in darksom cave,
For that I would not yeeld that to Sansfoy I gave.

XLVIII

'But since faire sunne hath sperst that lowring clowd,
And to my loathed life now shewes some light,
Under your beames I will me safely shrowd
From dreaded storme of his disdainfull spight:
To you th' inheritance belonges by right
Of brothers prayse, to you eke longes his love.

Let not his love, let not his restlesse spright,
Be unreveng'd, that calles to you above
From wandring Stygian shores, where it doth endlesse move.'

XLIX

Thereto said he, 'Faire dame, be nought dismaid
For sorrowes past; their griefe is with them gone:
Ne yet of present perill be affraid:
For needlesse feare did never vantage none,
And helplesse hap it booteth not to mone.
Dead is Sansfoy, his vitall paines are past,
Though greeved ghost for vengeance deep do grone:
He lives, that shall him pay his dewties last,
And guiltie Elfin blood shall sacrifice in hast.'

L

'O! but I feare the fickle freakes,' quoth shee,
'Of Fortune false, and oddes of armes in field.'
'Why, dame,' quoth he, 'what oddes can ever bee,
Where both doe fight alike, to win or yield?'
'Yea, but,' quoth she, 'he beares a charmed shield,
And eke enchaunted armes, that none can perce,
Ne none can wound the man, that does them wield.'
'Charmd or enchaunted,' answerd he then ferce,
'I no whitt reck, ne you the like need to reherce.

LI

'But, faire Fidessa, sithens Fortunes guile,
Or enimies powre, hath now captived you,
Returne from whence ye came, and rest a while,
Till morrow next, that I the Elfe subdew,
And with Sansfoyes dead dowry you endew.'
'Ay me! that is a double death,' she said,
'With proud foes sight my sorrow to renew:
Where ever yet I be, my secrete aide
Shall follow you.' So, passing forth, she him obaid.

## CANTO V

The faithfull knight in equall field
Subdewes his faithlesse foe,
Whom false Duessa saves, and for
His cure to hell does goe.

I

The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
And is with childe of glorious great intent,
Can never rest, untill it forth have brought
Th' eternall brood of glorie excellent:
Such restlesse passion did all night torment
The flaming corage of that Faery knight,
Devizing how that doughtie turnament
With greatest honour he atchieven might:
Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

II

At last, the golden orientall gate
Of greatest heaven gan to open fayre,
And Phoebus, fresh as brydegrome to his mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie hayre,
And hurld his glistring beams through gloomy ayre.
Which when the wakeful Elfe perceivd, streight way
He started up, and did him selfe prepayre
In sunbright armes, and battailous array:
For with that Pagan proud he combatt will that day.

III

And forth he comes into the commune hall,
Where earely waite him many a gazing eye,
To weet what end to straunger knights may fall.
There many minstrales maken melody,
To drive away the dull melancholy,
And many bardes, that to the trembling chord
Can tune their timely voices cunningly,
And many chronielers, that can record
Old loves, and warres for ladies doen by many a lord.

IV

Soone after comes the cruell Sarazin,
In woven maile all armed warily,
And sternly lookes at him, who not a pin
Does care for looke of living creatures eye.

They bring them wines of Greece and Araby
And daintie spices fetcht from furthest Ynd,
To kindle heat of corage privily:
And in the wine a solemne oth they bynd
T' observe the sacred lawes of armes, that are assynd.

V

At last forth comes that far renowmed queene,
With royall pomp and princely majestie:
She is ybrought unto a paled greene,
And placed under stately canapee,
The warlike feates of both those knights to see.
On th' other side, in all mens open vew,
Duessa placed is, and on a tree
Sansfoy his shield is hangd with bloody hew:
Both those, the lawrell girlonds to the victor dew.

VI

A shrilling trompett sownded from on hye,
And unto battaill bad them selves addresse:
Their shining shieldes about their wrestes they tye,
And burning blades about their heades doe blesse,
The instruments of wrath and heavinesse:
With greedy force each other doth assayle,
And strike so fiercely, that they doe impresse
Deepe dinted furrowes in the battred mayle:
The yron walles to ward their blowes are weak and fraile.

VII

The Sarazin was stout, and wondrous strong,
And heaped blowes like yron hammers great:
For after blood and vengeance he did long.
The knight was fiers, and full of youthly heat,
And doubled strokes, like dreaded thunders threat:
For all for praise and honour he did fight.
Both stricken stryke, and beaten both doe beat,
That from their shields forth flyeth firie light,
And helmets, hewen deepe, shew marks of eithers might.

VIII

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for right:
As when a gryfon, seized of his prav,
A dragon fiers encountreth in his flight,
Through widest ayre making his ydle way,
That would his rightfull ravine rend away:
With hideous horror both together smight,
And souce so sore, that they the heavens affray:
The wise southsayer, seeing so sad sight,
Th' amazed vulgar telles of warres and mortall fight.

IX

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for right,
And each to deadly shame would drive his foe:
The cruell steele so greedily doth bight
In tender flesh, that streames of blood down flow,
With which the armes, that earst so bright did show,
Into a pure vermillion now are dyde.
Great ruth in all the gazers harts did grow,
Seeing the gored woundes to gape so wyde,
That victory they dare not wish to either side.

X

At last the Paynim chaunst to cast his eye,
His suddein eye, flaming with wrathfull fyre,
Upon his brothers shield, which hong thereby:
Therewith redoubled was his raging yre,
And said: 'Ah, wretched sonne of wofull syre!
Doest thou sit wayling by blacke Stygian lake,
Whylest here thy shield is hangd for victors hyre?
And, sluggish german, doest thy forces slake
To after-send his foe, that him may overtake?

XI

'Goe, caytive Elfe, him quickly overtake,
And soone redeeme from his long wandring woe:
Goe, guiltie ghost, to him my message make,
That I his shield have quit from dying foe.'
Therewith upon his crest he stroke him so,
That twise he reeled, readie twise to fall:

End of the doubtfull battaile deemed tho
The lookers on, and lowd to him gan call
The false Duessa, 'Thine the shield, and I, and all!'

XII

Soone as the Faerie heard his ladie speake,
Out of his swowning dreame he gan awake,
And quickning faith, that earst was woxen weake,
The creeping deadly cold away did shake:
Tho, mov'd with wrath, and shame, and ladies sake,
Of all attonce he cast avengd to be,
And with so' exceeding furie at him strake,
That forced him to stoupe upon his knee:
Had he not stouped so, he should have cloven bee.

XIII

And to him said: 'Goe now, proud miscreant,
Thy selfe thy message do to german deare;
Alone he, wandring, thee too long doth want:
Goe say, his foe thy shield with his doth beare.'
Therewith his heavie hand he high gan reare,
Him to have slaine; when lo! a darkesome clowd
Upon him fell: he no where doth appeare,
But vanisht is. The Elfe him calls alowd,
But answer none receives: the darknes him does shrowd.

XIV

In haste Duessa from her place arose,
And to him running sayd: 'O prowest knight,
That ever ladie to her love did chose,
Let now abate the terrour of your might,
And quench the flame of furious despight
And bloodie vengeance; lo! th' infernall powres,
Covering your foe with cloud of deadly night,
Have borne him hence to Plutoes balefull bowres.
The conquest yours, I yours, the shield and glory yours!'

XV

Not all so satisfide, with greedy eye
He sought all round about, his thristy blade
To bathe in blood of faithlesse enimy;
Who all that while lay hid in secret shade:
He standes amazed, how he thence should fade.
At last the trumpets triumph sound on hie,
And running heralds humble homage made,
Greeting him goodly with new victorie,
And to him brought the shield, the cause of enmitie.

XVI

Wherewith he goeth to that soveraine queene,
And falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his service seene:
Which she accepts, with thankes and goodly gree,
Greatly advauncing his gay chevalree:
So marcheth home, and by her takes the knight,
Whom all the people followe with great glee,
Shouting, and clapping all their hands on hight,
That all the ayre it fils, and flyes to heaven bright.

XVII

Home is he brought, and layd in sumptuous bed:
Where many skilfull leaches him abide,
To salve his hurts, that yet still freshly bled.
In wine and oyle they wash his woundes wide,
And softly can embalme on everie side.
And all the while, most heavenly melody
About the bed sweet musicke did divide,
Him to beguile of griefe and agony:
And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

XVIII

As when a wearie traveiler, that strayes
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,
Unweeting of the perillous wandring wayes,
Doth meete a cruell craftie crocodile,
Which, in false griefe hyding his harmefull guile,
Doth weepe full sore, and sheddeth tender teares:
The foolish man, that pitties all this while
His mournefull plight, is swallowd up unwares,
Forgetfull of his owne, that mindes an others cares.

XIX

So wept Duessa untill eventyde,
That shyning lampes in Joves high house were light:
Then forth she rose, ne lenger would abide,
But comes unto the place, where th' hethen knight,
In slombring swownd, nigh voyd of vitall spright,
Lay cover'd with inchaunted cloud all day:
Whom when she found, as she him left in plight,
To wayle his wofull case she would not stay,
But to the easterne coast of heaven makes speedy way:

XX

Where griesly Night, with visage deadly sad,
That Phœbus chearefull face durst never vew,
And in a foule blacke pitchy mantle clad,
She findes forth comming from her darksome mew,
Where she all day did hide her hated hew.
Before the dore her yron charet stood,
Already harnessed for journey new;
And coleblacke steedes yborne of hellish brood,
That on their rusty bits did champ, as they were wood.

XXI

Who when she saw Duessa sunny bright,
Adornd with gold and jewels shining cleare,
She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
And th' unacquainted light began to feare;
For never did such brightnes there appeare;
And would have backe retyred to her cave,
Untill the witches speach she gan to heare,
Saying: 'Yet, O thou dreaded dame, I crave
Abyde, till I have told the message which I have.'

XXII

She stayd, and foorth Duessa gan proceede:
'O thou most auncient grandmother of all,
More old then Jove, whom thou at first didst breede,
Or that great house of gods cælestiall,
Which wast begot in Dæmogorgons hall,
And sawst the secrets of the world unmade,
Why suffredst thou thy nephewes deare to fall
With Elfin sword, most shamefully betrade?
Lo where the stout Sansjoy doth sleepe in deadly shade!

XXIII

'And him before, I saw with bitter eyes
The bold Sansfoy shrinck underneath his speare;
And now the pray of fowles in field he lyes,
Nor wayld of friends, nor layd on groning beare,
That whylome was to me too dearely deare.
O what of gods then boots it to be borne,
If old Aveugles sonnes so evill heare?
Or who shall not great Nightes children scorne,
When two of three her nephews are so fowle forlorne?

XXIV

'Up, then! up, dreary dame, of darknes queene!
Go gather up the reliques of thy race,
Or else goe them avenge, and let be seene
That dreaded Night in brightest day hath place,
And can the children of fayre Light deface.'
Her feeling speaches some compassion mov'd
In hart, and chaunge in that great mothers face:
Yet pitty in her hart was never prov'd
Till then: for evermore she hated, never lov'd:

XXV

And said, 'Deare daughter, rightly may I rew
The fall of famous children borne of mee,
And good successes, which their foes ensew:
But who can turne the streame of destinee,
Or breake the chayne of strong necessitee,
Which fast is tyde to Joves eternall seat?
The sonnes of Day he favoureth, I see,
And by my ruines thinkes to make them great:
To make one great by others losse is bad excheat.

XXVI

'Yet shall they not escape so freely all;
For some shall pay the price of others guilt:
And he, the man that made Sansfoy to fall,

Shall with his owne blood price that he hath spilt.
But what art thou, that telst of nephews kilt?'
'I, that do seeme not I, Duessa ame,'
Quoth she, 'how ever now, in garments gilt
And gorgeous gold arayd, I to thee came;
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceipt and Shame.'

XXVII

Then bowing downe her aged backe, she kist
The wicked witch, saying: 'In that fayre face
The false resemblaunce of Deceipt, I wist,
Did closely lurke; yet so true-seeming grace
It carried, that I scarse in darksome place
Could it discerne, though I the mother bee
Of Falshood, and roote of Duessaes race.
O welcome, child, whom I have longd to see,
And now have seene unwares! Lo, now I goe with thee.'

XXVIII

Then to her yron wagon she betakes,
And with her beares the fowle welfavourd witch:
Through mirkesome aire her ready way she makes.
Her twyfold teme, of which two blacke as pitch,
And two were browne, yet each to each unlich,
Did softly swim away, ne ever stamp,
Unlesse she chaunst their stubborne mouths to twitch;
Then foming tarre, their bridles they would champ,
And trampling the fine element, would fiercely ramp.

XXIX

So well they sped, that they be come at length
Unto the place, whereas the Paynim lay,
Devoid of outward sence and native strength,
Coverd with charmed cloud from vew of day
And sight of men, since his late luckelesse fray.
His cruell wounds, with cruddy bloud congeald,
They binden up so wisely as they may,
And handle softly, till they can be heald:
So lay him in her charett, close in night conceald.

XXX

And all the while she stood upon the ground,
The wakefull dogs did never cease to bay,
As giving warning of th' unwonted sound,
With which her yron wheeles did them affray,
And her darke griesly looke them much dismay:
The messenger of death, the ghastly owle,
With drery shriekes did also her bewray;
And hungry wolves continually did howle
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so fowle.

XXXI

Thence turning backe in silence softe they stole,
And brought the heavy corse with easy pace
To yawning gulfe of deepe Avernus hole.
By that same hole an entraunce, darke and bace,
With smoake and sulphur hiding all the place,
Descends to hell: there creature never past,
That backe retourned without heavenly grace;
But dreadfull Furies, which their chaines have brast,
And damned sprights sent forth to make ill men aghast.

XXXII

By that same way the direfull dames doe drive
Their mournefull charett, fild with rusty blood,
And downe to Plutoes house are come bilive:
Which passing through, on every side them stood
The trembling ghosts with sad amazed mood,
Chattring their iron teeth, and staring wide
With stony eies; and all the hellish brood
Of feends infernall flockt on every side,
To gaze on erthly wight, that with the Night durst ride.

XXXIII

They pas the bitter waves of Acheron,
Where many soules sit wailing woefully.
And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton,

Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry,
And with sharp shrilling shriekes doe bootlesse cry,
Cursing high Jove, the which them thither sent.
The house of endlesse paine is built thereby,
In which ten thousand sorts of punishment
The cursed creatures doe eternally torment.

XXXIV

Before the threshold dreadfull Cerberus
His three deformed heads did lay along,
Curled with thousand adders venemous,
And lilled forth his bloody flaming tong:
At them he gan to reare his bristles strong,
And felly gnarre, untill Dayes enemy
Did him appease; then downe his taile he hong,
And suffered them to passen quietly:
For she in hell and heaven had power equally.

XXXV

There was Ixion turned on a wheele,
For daring tempt the queene of heaven to sin;
And Sisyphus an huge round stone did reele
Against an hill, ne might from labour lin;
There thristy Tantalus hong by the chin;
And Tityus fed a vultur on his maw;
Typhœus joynts were stretched on a gin;
Theseus condemned to endlesse slouth by law;
And fifty sisters water in leke vessels draw.

XXXVI

They all, beholding worldly wights in place,
Leave off their worke, unmindfull of their smart,
To gaze on them; who forth by them doe pace,
Till they be come unto the furthest part:
Where was a cave ywrought by wondrous art,
Deepe, darke, uneasy, dolefull, comfortlesse,
In which sad Aesculapius far apart
Emprisond was in chaines remedilesse,
For that Hippolytus rent corse he did redresse.

XXXVII

Hippolytus a jolly huntsman was,
That wont in charett chace the foming bore;
He all his peeres in beauty did surpas,
But ladies love, as losse of time, forbore:
His wanton stepdame loved him the more;
But when she saw her offred sweets refusd,
Her love she turnd to hate, and him before
His father fierce of treason false accusd,
And with her gealous termes his open eares abusd.

XXXVIII

Who, all in rage, his sea-god syre besought,
Some cursed vengeaunce on his sonne to cast:
From surging gulf two monsters streight were brought,
With dread whereof his chacing steedes aghast
Both charett swifte and huntsman overcast.
His goodly corps, on ragged cliffs yrent,
Was quite dismembred, and his members chast
Scattered on every mountaine as he went,
That of Hippolytus was lefte no moniment.

XXXIX

His cruell stepdame, seeing what was donne,
Her wicked daies with wretched knife did end,
In death avowing th' innocence of her sonne.
Which hearing, his rash syre began to rend
His heare, and hasty tong, that did offend:
Tho, gathering up the relicks of his smart,
By Dianes meanes, who was Hippolyts frend,
Them brought to Aesculape, that by his art
Did heale them all againe, and joyned every part.

XL

Such wondrous science in mans witt to rain
When Jove avizd, that could the dead revive,
And fates expired could renew again,
Of endlesse life he might him not deprive,
But unto hell did thrust him downe alive,
With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore:
Where long remaining, he did alwaies strive
Him selfe with salves to health for to restore,
And slake the heavenly fire, that raged evermore.

XLI

There auncient Night arriving, did alight
From her nigh weary wayne, and in her armes

To Æsculapius brought the wounded knight:
Whome having softly disaraid of armes,
Tho gan to him discover all his harmes,
Beseeching him with prayer, and with praise,
If either salves, or oyles, or herbes, or charmes
A fordonne wight from dore of death mote raise,
He would at her request prolong her nephews daies.

XLII

'Ah! dame,' quoth he, 'thou temptest me in vaine
To dare the thing, which daily yet I rew,
And the old cause of my continued paine
With like attempt to like end to renew.
Is not enough, that, thrust from heaven dew,
Here endlesse penaunce for one fault I pay,
But that redoubled crime with vengeaunce new
Thou biddest me to eeke? Can Night defray
The wrath of thundring Jove, that rules both Night and Day?'

XLIII

'Not so,' quoth she; 'but sith that heavens king
From hope of heaven hath thee excluded quight,
Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for thing,
And fearest not that more thee hurten might,
Now in the powre of everlasting Night?
Goe to then, O thou far renowmed sonne
Of great Apollo, shew thy famous might
In medicine, that els hath to thee wonne
Great pains, and greater praise, both never to be donne.'

XLIV

Her words prevaild: and then the learned leach
His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay,
And all things els, the which his art did teach:
Which having seene, from thence arose away
The mother of dredd darkenesse, and let stay
Aveugles sonne there in the leaches cure,
And backe retourning, tooke her wonted way
To ronne her timely race, whilst Phoebus pure
In westerne waves his weary wagon did recure.

XLV

The false Duessa, leaving noyous Night,
Returnd to stately pallace of Dame Pryde;
Where when she came, she found the Faery knight
Departed thence, albee his woundes wyde,
Not throughly heald, unready were to ryde.
Good cause he had to hasten thence away;
For on a day his wary dwarfe had spyde
Where, in a dungeon deepe, huge nombers lay
Of caytive wretched thralls, that wayled night and day:

XLVI

A ruefull sight as could be seene with eie:
Of whom he learned had in secret wise
The hidden cause of their captivitie;
How mortgaging their lives to Covetise,
Through wastfull pride and wanton riotise,
They were by law of that proud tyrannesse,
Provokt with Wrath, and Envyes false surmise,
Condemned to that dongeon mercilesse,
Where they should live in wo, and dye in wretchednesse.

XLVII

There was that great proud king of Babylon,
That would compell all nations to adore,
And him as onely God to call upon,
Till, through celestiall doome thrown out of dore,
Into an oxe he was transformd of yore:
There also was King Crœsus, that enhaunst
His hart too high through his great richesse store;
And proud Antiochus, the which advaunst
His cursed hand gainst God, and on his altares daunst.

XLVIII

And, them long time before, great Nimrod was,
That first the world with sword and fire warrayd;

And after him old Ninus far did pas
In princely pomp, of all the world obayd;
There also was that mightie monarch layd
Low under all, yet above all in pride,
That name of native syre did fowle upbrayd,
And would as Ammons sonne be magnifide,
Till, scornd of God and man, a shamefull death he dide.

XLIX

All these together in one heape were throwne,
Like carkases of beastes in butchers stall.
And, in another corner, wide were strowne
The antique ruins of the Romanes fall:
Great Romulus, the grandsyre of them all,
Proud Tarquin, and too lordly Lentulus,
Stout Scipio, and stubborne Hannibal,
Ambitious Sylla, and sterne Marius,
High Caesar, great Pompey, and fiers Antonius.

L

Amongst these mightie men were wemen mixt,
Proud wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their yoke:
The bold Semiramis, whose sides, transfixt
With sonnes own blade, her fowle reproches spoke;
Fayre Sthenobœa, that her selfe did choke
With wilfull chord, for wanting of her will;
High minded Cleopatra, that with stroke
Of aspes sting her selfe did stoutly kill:
And thousands moe the like, that did that dongeon fill.

LI

Besides the endlesse routes of wretched thralles,
Which thether were assembled day by day,
From all the world, after their wofull falles
Through wicked pride and wasted welthes decay.
But most, of all which in that dongeon lay,
Fell from high princes courtes, or ladies bowres,
Where they in ydle pomp, or wanton play,
Consumed had their goods, and thriftlesse howres,
And lastly thrown themselves into these heavy stowres.

LII

Whose case whenas the carefull dwarfe had tould,
And made ensample of their mournfull sight
Unto his maister, he no lenger would
There dwell in perill of like painefull plight,
But earely rose, and ere that dawning light
Discovered had the world to heaven wyde,
He by a privy posterne tooke his flight,
That of no envious eyes he mote be spyde:
For doubtlesse death ensewed, if any him descryde.

LIII

Scarse could he footing find in that fowle way,
For many corses, like a great lay-stall,
Of murdred men, which therein strowed lay,
Without remorse or decent funerall:
Which al through that great princesse pride did fall
And came to shamefull end. And them besyde,
Forth ryding underneath the castell wall,
A donghill of dead carcases he spyde,
The dreadfull spectacle of that sad House of Pryde.

## CANTO VI

From lawlesse lust by wondrous grace
Fayre Una is releast:
Whom salvage nation does adore,
And learnes her wise beheast.

I

As when a ship, that flyes fayre under sayle,
An hidden rocke escaped hath unwares,
That lay in waite her wrack for to bewaile,
The marriner, yet halfe amazed, stares
At perill past, and yet in doubt ne dares
To joy at his foolhappie oversight:
So doubly is distrest twixt joy and cares
The dreadlesse corage of this Elfin knight,
Having escapt so sad ensamples in his sight.

II

Yet sad he was, that his too hastie speed
The fayre Duess' had forst him leave behind;
And yet more sad, that Una, his deare dreed,
Her truth had staynd with treason so unkind:
Yet cryme in her could never creature find,

But for his love, and for her own selfe sake,
She wandred had from one to other Ynd,
Him for to seeke, ne ever would forsake,
Till her unwares the fiers Sansloy did overtake.

III

Who, after Archimagoes fowle defeat,
Led her away into a forest wilde,
And turning wrathfull fyre to lustfull heat,
With beastly sin thought her to have defilde,
And made the vassall of his pleasures vilde.
Yet first he cast by treatie, and by traynes,
Her to persuade that stubborne fort to yilde:
For greater conquest of hard love he gaynes,
That workes it to his will, then he that it constraines.

IV

With fawning wordes he courted her a while,
And, looking lovely and oft sighing sore,
Her constant hart did tempt with diverse guile:
But wordes, and lookes, and sighes she did abhore,
As rock of diamond stedfast evermore.
Yet for to feed his fyrie lustfull eye,
He snatcht the vele that hong her face before:
Then gan her beautie shyne as brightest skye,
And burnt his beastly hart t' efforce her chastitye.

V

So when he saw his flatt'ring artes to fayle,
And subtile engines bett from batteree,
With greedy force he gan the fort assayle,
Whereof he weend possessed soone to bee,
And win rich spoile of ransackt chastitee.
Ah! heavens, that doe this hideous act behold,
And heavenly virgin thus outraged see,
How can ye vengeance just so long withhold,
And hurle not flashing flames upon that Paynim bold?

VI

The pitteous mayden, carefull comfortlesse,
Does throw out thrilling shriekes, and shrieking cryes,
The last vaine helpe of wemens great distresse,
And with loud plaintes importuneth the skyes;
That molten starres doe drop like weeping eyes,
And Phœbus, flying so most shamefull sight,
His blushing face in foggy cloud implyes,
And hydes for shame. What witt of mortall wight
Can now devise to quitt a thrall from such a plight?

VII

Eternall Providence, exceeding thought,
Where none appeares can make her selfe a way:
A wondrous way it for this lady wrought,
From lyons clawes to pluck the gryped pray.
Her shrill outcryes and shrieks so loud did bray,
That all the woodes and forestes did resownd;
A troupe of Faunes and Satyres far a way
Within the wood were dauncing in a rownd,
Whiles old Sylvanus slept in shady arber sownd.

VIII

Who, when they heard that pitteous strained voice,
In haste forsooke their rurall meriment,
And ran towardes the far rebownded noyce,
To weet what wight so loudly did lament.
Unto the place they come incontinent:
Whom when the raging Sarazin espyde,
A rude, mishapen, monstrous rablement,
Whose like he never saw, he durst not byde,
But got his ready steed, and fast away gan ryde.

IX

The wyld woodgods, arrived in the place,
There find the virgin doolfull desolate,
With ruffled rayments, and fayre blubbred face,
As her outrageous foe had left her late,
And trembling yet through feare of former hate.
All stand amazed at so uncouth sight,
And gin to pittie her unhappie state;
All stand astonied at her beautie bright,
In their rude eyes unworthy of so wofull plight.

X

She, more amazd, in double dread doth dwell;
And every tender part for feare does shake:
As when a greedy wolfe, through honger fell,
A seely lamb far from the flock does take,
Of whom he meanes his bloody feast to make,
A lyon spyes fast running towards him,
The innocent pray in hast he does forsake,
Which, quitt from death, yet quakes in every lim
With chaunge of feare, to see the lyon looke so grim.

XI

Such fearefull fitt assaid her trembling hart,
Ne word to speake, ne joynt to move, she had:
The salvage nation feele her secret smart,
And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad:
Their frowning forheades, with rough hornes yclad,
And rustick horror, all a syde doe lay,
And, gently grenning, shew a semblance glad
To comfort her, and, feare to put away,
Their backward bent knees teach her humbly to obay.

XII

The doubtfull damzell dare not yet committ
Her single person to their barbarous truth,
But still twixt feare and hope amazd does sitt,
Late learnd what harme to hasty trust ensu'th:
They, in compassion of her tender youth,
And wonder of her beautie soverayne,
Are wonne with pitty and unwonted ruth,
And all prostrate upon the lowly playne,
Doe kisse her feete, and fawne on her with count'nance fayne.

XIII

Their harts she ghesseth by their humble guise,
And yieldes her to extremitie of time;
So from the ground she fearelesse doth arise,
And walketh forth without suspect of crime:
They all as glad as birdes of joyous pryme,
Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing round,
Shouting, and singing all a shepheards ryme;
And, with greene braunches strowing all the ground,
Do worship her as queene with olive girlond cround.

XIV

And all the way their merry pipes they sound,
That all the woods with doubled eccho ring,
And with their horned feet doe weare the ground,
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring.
So towards old Sylvanus they her bring;
Who with the noyse awaked, commeth out
To weet the cause, his weake steps governing
And aged limbs on cypresse stadle stout;
And with an yvie twyne his waste is girt about.

XV

Far off he wonders what them makes so glad,
Or Bacchus merry fruit they did invent,
Or Cybeles franticke rites have made them mad.
They, drawing nigh, unto their god present
That flowre of fayth and beautie excellent:
The god himselfe, vewing that mirrhour rare,
Stood long amazd, and burnt in his intent:
His owne fayre Dryope now he thinkes not faire,
And Pholoe fowle, when her to this he doth compaire.

XVI

The woodborne people fall before her flat,
And worship her as goddesse of the wood;
And old Sylvanus selfe bethinkes not, what
To thinke of wight so fayre, but gazing stood,
In doubt to deeme her borne of earthly brood:
Sometimes Dame Venus selfe he seemes to see,
But Venus never had so sober mood;
Sometimes Diana he her takes to be,
But misseth bow, and shaftes, and buskins to her knee.

XVII

By vew of her he ginneth to revive
His ancient love, and dearest Cyparisse;

And calles to mind his pourtraiture alive,
How fayre he was, and yet not fayre to this;
And how he slew with glauncing dart amisse
A gentle hynd, the which the lovely boy
Did love as life, above all worldly blisse;
For griefe whereof the lad n'ould after joy,
But pynd away in anguish and selfewild annoy.

XVIII

The wooddy nymphes, faire Hamadryades,
Her to behold do thether runne apace,
And all the troupe of light-foot Naiades
Flocke all about to see her lovely face:
But when they vewed have her heavenly grace,
They envy her in their malitious mind,
And fly away for feare of fowle disgrace:
But all the Satyres scorne their woody kind,
And henceforth nothing faire, but her, on earth they find.

XIX

Glad of such lucke, the luckelesse lucky mayd
Did her content to please their feeble eyes,
And long time with that salvage people stayd,
To gather breath in many miseryes.
During which time her gentle wit she plyes,
To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine,
And made her th' image of idolatryes;
But when their bootlesse zeale she did restrayne
From her own worship, they her asse would worship fayn.

XX

It fortuned, a noble warlike knight
By just occasion to that forrest came,
To seeke his kindred, and the lignage right,
From whence he tooke his weldeserved name:
He had in armes abroad wonne muchell fame,
And fild far landes with glorie of his might;
Plaine, faithfull, true, and enimy of shame,
And ever lov'd to fight for ladies right,
But in vaine glorious frayes he litle did delight.

XXI

A Satyres sonne yborne in forrest wyld,
By straunge adventure as it did betyde,
And there begotten of a lady myld,
Fayre Thyamis the daughter of Labryde,
That was in sacred bandes of wedlocke tyde
To Therion, a loose unruly swayne,
Who had more joy to raunge the forrest wyde,
And chase the salvage beast with busie payne,
Then serve his ladies love, and waste in pleasures vayne.

XXII

The forlorne mayd did with loves longing burne,
And could not lacke her lovers company,
But to the wood she goes, to serve her turne,
And seeke her spouse, that from her still does fly,
And followes other game and venery.
A Satyre chaunst her wandring for to finde,
And kindling coles of lust in brutish eye,
The loyall linkes of wedlocke did unbinde,
And made her person thrall unto his beastly kind.

XXIII

So long in secret cabin there he held
Her captive to his sensuall desyre,
Till that with timely fruit her belly sweld,
And bore a boy unto that salvage syre:
Then home he suffred her for to retyre,
For ransome leaving him the late-borne childe;
Whom, till to ryper yeares he gan aspyre,
He nousled up in life and manners wilde,
Emongst wild beastes and woods, from lawes of men exilde.

XXIV

For all he taught the tender ymp was but
To banish cowardize and bastard feare:
His trembling hand he would him force to put
Upon the lyon and the rugged beare,
And from the she beares teats her whelps to teare;
And eke wyld roring buls he would him make
To tame, and ryde their backes not made to beare;
And the robuckes in flight to overtake:
That everie beast for feare of him did fly and quake.

XXV

Thereby so fearelesse and so fell he grew,
That his owne syre and maister of his guise
Did often tremble at his horrid vew,
And oft, for dread of hurt, would him advise
The angry beastes not rashly to despise,
Nor too much to provoke: for he would learne
The lyon stoup to him in lowly wise,
(A lesson hard) and make the libbard sterne
Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge did earne.

XXVI

And for to make his powre approved more,
Wyld beastes in yron yokes he would compell;
The spotted panther, and the tusked bore,
The pardale swift, and the tigre cruell,
The antelope, and wolfe both fiers and fell;
And them constraine in equall teme to draw.
Such joy he had their stubborne harts to quell,
And sturdie courage tame with dreadfull aw,
That his beheast they feared, as a tyrans law.

XXVII

His loving mother came upon a day
Unto the woodes, to see her little sonne;
And chaunst unwares to meet him in the way,
After his sportes and cruell pastime donne,
When after him a lyonesse did runne,
That roaring all with rage, did lowd requere
Her children deare, whom he away had wonne:
The lyon whelpes she saw how he did beare,
And lull in rugged armes, withouten childish feare.

XXVIII

The fearefull dame all quaked at the sight,
And turning backe gan fast to fly away,
Untill, with love revokt from vaine affright,
She hardly yet perswaded was to stay,
And then to him these womanish words gan say:
'Ah! Satyrane, my dearling and my joy,
For love of me leave off this dreadfull play;
To dally thus with death is no fit toy:
Go find some other play-fellowes, mine own sweet boy.'

XXIX

In these and like delightes of bloody game
He trayned was, till ryper yeares he raught;
And there abode, whylst any beast of name
Walkt in that forrest, whom he had not taught
To feare his force: and then his courage haught
Desyrd of forreine foemen to be knowne,
And far abroad for straunge adventures sought:
In which his might was never overthrowne,
But through al Faery Lond his famous worth was blown.

XXX

Yet evermore it was his maner faire,
After long labours and adventures spent,
Unto those native woods for to repaire,
To see his syre and ofspring auncient.
And now he thether came for like intent;
Where he unwares the fairest Una found,
Straunge lady, in so straunge habiliment,
Teaching the Satyres, which her sat around,
Trew sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did redound.

XXXI

He wondred at her wisedome hevenly rare,
Whose like in womens witt he never knew;
And when her curteous deeds he did compare,
Gan her admire, and her sad sorrowes rew,
Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles threw,
And joyd to make proofe of her cruelty
On gentle dame, so hurtlesse and so trew:
Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,
And learnd her discipline of faith and verity.

XXXII

But she, all vowd unto the Redcrosse Knight,
His wandring perill closely did lament,
Ne in this new acquaintaunce could delight,
But her deare heart with anguish did torment,
And all her witt in secret counsels spent,
How to escape. At last in privy wise
To Satyrane she shewed her intent;
Who, glad to gain such favour, gan devise,
How with that pensive maid he best might thence arise.

XXXIII

So on a day, when Satyres all were gone
To doe their service to Sylvanus old,

The gentle virgin, left behinde alone,
He led away with corage stout and bold.
Too late it was to Satyres to be told,
Or ever hope recover her againe:
In vaine he seekes that, having, cannot hold.
So fast he carried her with carefull paine,
That they the wods are past, and come now to the plaine.

XXXIV

The better part now of the lingring day
They traveild had, whenas they far espide
A weary wight forwandring by the way,
And towards him they gan in hast to ride,
To weete of newes that did abroad betide,
Or tidings of her Knight of the Redcrosse.
But he, them spying, gan to turne aside
For feare, as seemd, or for some feigned losse:
More greedy they of newes fast towards him do crosse.

XXXV

A silly man, in simple weeds forworne,
And soild with dust of the long dried way;
His sandales were with toilsome travell torne,
And face all tand with scorching sunny ray,
As he had traveild many a sommers day
Through boyling sands of Arabie and Ynde;
And in his hand a Jacobs staffe, to stay
His weary limbs upon; and eke behind
His scrip did hang, in which his needments he did bind.

XXXVI

The knight, approching nigh, of him inquerd
Tidings of warre, and of adventures new;
But warres, nor new adventures, none he herd.
Then Una gan to aske, if ought he knew
Or heard abroad of that her champion trew,
That in his armour bare a croslet red.
'Ay me! deare dame,' quoth he, 'well may I rew
To tell the sad sight which mine eies have red:
These eies did see that knight both living and eke ded.'

XXXVII

That cruell word her tender hart so thrild,
That suddein cold did ronne through every vaine,
And stony horrour all her sences fild
With dying fitt, that downe she fell for paine.
The knight her lightly reared up againe,
And comforted with curteous kind reliefe:
Then, wonne from death, she bad him tellen plaine
The further processe of her hidden griefe;
The lesser pangs can beare, who hath endur'd the chief.

XXXVIII

Then gan the pilgrim thus: 'I chaunst this day,
This fatall day, that shall I ever rew,
To see two knights in travell on my way
(A sory sight) arraung'd in batteill new,
Both breathing vengeaunce, both of wrathfull hew:
My feareful flesh did tremble at their strife,
To see their blades so greedily imbrew,
That, dronke with blood, yet thristed after life:
What more? the Redcrosse Knight was slain with Paynim knife.'

XXXIX

'Ah, dearest Lord!' quoth she, 'how might that bee,
And he the stoutest knight, that ever wonne?'
'Ah, dearest dame,' quoth hee, 'how might I see
The thing, that might not be, and yet was donne?'
'Where is,' said Satyrane, 'that Paynims sonne,
That him of life, and us of joy, hath refte?'
'Not far away,' quoth he, 'he hence doth wonne,
Foreby a fountaine, where I late him lefte
Washing his bloody wounds, that through the steele were cleft.'

XL

Therewith the knight thence marched forth in hast,
Whiles Una, with huge heavinesse opprest,
Could not for sorrow follow him so fast;
And soone he came, as he the place had ghest,
Whereas that Pagan proud him selfe did rest
In secret shadow by a fountaine side:
Even he it was, that earst would have supprest

Faire Una: whom when Satyrane espide,
With foule reprochfull words he boldly him
defide;

XLI

And said: 'Arise, thou cursed miscreaunt,
That hast with knightlesse guile and trecherous train
Faire knighthood fowly shamed, and doest vaunt
That good Knight of the Redcrosse to have slain:
Arise, and with like treason now maintain
Thy guilty wrong, or els thee guilty yield.'
The Sarazin, this hearing, rose amain,
And catching up in hast his three square shield
And shining helmet, soone him buckled to the field;

XLII

And, drawing nigh him, said: 'Ah, misborn Elfe!
In evill houre thy foes thee hither sent,
Anothers wrongs to wreak upon thy selfe:
Yet ill thou blamest me, for having blent
My name with guile and traiterous intent:
That Redcrosse Knight, perdie, I never slew;
But had he beene where earst his armes were lent,
Th' enchaunter vaine his errour should not rew:
But thou his errour shalt, I hope, now proven trew.'

XLIII

Therewith they gan, both furious and fell,
To thunder blowes, and fiersly to assaile
Each other, bent his enimy to quell;
That with their force they perst both plate and maile,
And made wide furrowes in their fleshes fraile,
That it would pitty any living eie.
Large floods of blood adowne their sides did raile;
But floods of blood could not them satisfie:
Both hongred after death: both chose to win, or die.

XLIV

So long they fight, and fell revenge pursue,
That, fainting each, them selves to breathen lett,
And, ofte refreshed, battell oft renue:
As when two bores, with rancling malice mett,
Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely frett,
Til breathlesse both them selves aside retire,
Where, foming wrath, their cruell tuskes they whett,
And trample th' earth, the whiles they may respire;
Then backe to fight againe, new breathed and entire.

XLV

So fiersly, when these knights had breathed once,
They gan to fight retourne, increasing more
Their puissant force and cruell rage attonce,
With heaped strokes more hugely then before,
That with their drery wounds and bloody gore
They both deformed, scarsely could bee known.
By this, sad Una fraught with anguish sore,
Led with their noise, which through the aire was thrown,
Arriv'd, wher they in erth their fruitles blood had sown.

XLVI

Whom all so soone as that proud Sarazin
Espide, he gan revive the memory
Of his leud lusts, and late attempted sin,
And lefte the doubtfull battell hastily,
To catch her, newly offred to his eie:
But Satyrane, with strokes him turning, staid,
And sternely bad him other businesse plie
Then hunt the steps of pure unspotted maid:
Wherewith he al enrag'd, these bitter speaches said:

XLVII

'O foolish Faeries sonne! what fury mad
Hath thee incenst to hast thy dolefull fate?
Were it not better I that lady had
Then that thou hadst repented it too late?
Most sencelesse man he, that himselfe doth hate,
To love another. Lo then, for thine ayd,
Here take thy lovers token on thy pate.'

So they two fight; the whiles the royall mayd
Fledd farre away, of that proud Paynim sore afrayd.

XLVIII

But that false pilgrim, which that leasing told,
Being in deed old Archimage, did stay
In secret shadow, all this to behold,
And much rejoyced in their bloody fray:
But when he saw the damsell passe away,
He left his stond, and her pursewd apace,
In hope to bring her to her last decay.
But for to tell her lamentable cace,
And eke this battels end, will need another place.

## CANTO VII

The Redcrosse Knight is captive made,
By gyaunt proud oppprest:
Prince Arthure meets with Una greatly with those newes distrest.

I

What man so wise, what earthly witt so ware,
As to discry the crafty cunning traine,
By which Deceipt doth maske in visour faire,
And cast her coulours died deepe in graine,
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine,
And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,
The guiltlesse man with guile to entertaine?
Great maistresse of her art was that false dame,
The false Duessa, cloked with Fidessaes name.

II

Who when, returning from the drery Night,
She fownd not in that perilous Hous of Pryde,
Where she had left, the noble Redcross Knight,
Her hoped pray, she would no lenger byde,
But forth she went to seeke him far and wide.
Ere long she fownd, whereas he wearie sate
To rest him selfe, foreby a fountaine syde,
Disarmed all of yron-coted plate,
And by his side his steed the grassy forage ate.

III

Hee feedes upon the cooling shade, and bayes
His sweatie forehead in the breathing wynd,
Which through the trembling leaves full gently playes,
Wherein the chearefull birds of sundry kynd
Doe chaunt sweet musick, to delight his mynd.
The witch approching gan him fayrely greet,
And with reproch of carelesnes unkynd
Upbrayd, for leaving her in place unmeet,
With fowle words tempring faire, soure gall with hony sweet.

IV

Unkindnesse past, they gan of solace treat,
And bathe in pleasaunce of the joyous shade,
Which shielded them against the boyling heat,
And, with greene boughes decking a gloomy glade,
About the fountaine like a girlond made;
Whose bubbling wave did ever freshly well,
Ne ever would through fervent sommer fade:
The sacred nymph, which therein wont to dwell,
Was out of Dianes favor, as it then befell.

V

The cause was this: one day when Phœbe fayre
With all her band was following the chace,
This nymph, quite tyr'd with heat of scorching ayre,
Satt downe to rest in middest of the race:
The goddesse wroth gan fowly her disgrace,
And badd the waters, which from her did flow,
Be such as she her selfe was then in place.
Thenceforth her waters wexed dull and slow,
And all that drunke thereof did faint and feeble grow.

VI

Hereof this gentle knight unweeting was,
And lying downe upon the sandie graile,
Dronke of the streame, as cleare as christall glas:
Eftsoones his manly forces gan to fayle,

And mightie strong was turnd to feeble frayle:
His chaunged powres at first them selves not felt,
Till crudled cold his corage gan assayle,
And chearefull blood in fayntnes chill did melt,
Which, like a fever fit, through all his body swelt.

VII

Yet goodly court he made still to his dame,
Pourd out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd,
Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame:
Till at the last he heard a dreadfull sownd,
Which through the wood loud bellowing did rebownd,
That all the earth for terror seemd to shake,
And trees did tremble. Th' Elfe, therewith astownd,
Upstarted lightly from his looser make,
And his unready weapons gan in hand to take.

VIII

But ere he could his armour on him dight,
Or gett his shield, his monstrous enimy
With sturdie steps came stalking in his sight,
An hideous geaunt, horrible and hye,
That with his tallnesse seemd to threat the skye;
The ground eke groned under him for dreed:
His living like saw never living eye,
Ne durst behold: his stature did exceed
The hight of three the tallest sonnes of mortall seed.

IX

The greatest Earth his uncouth mother was,
And blustring Æolus his boasted syre;
Who with his breath, which through the world doth pas,
Her hollow womb did secretly inspyre,
And fild her hidden caves with stormie yre,
That she conceiv'd; and trebling the dew time,
In which the wombes of wemen doe expyre,
Brought forth this monstrous masse of earthly slyme,
Puft up with emptie wynd, and fild with sinfull cryme.

X

So growen great, through arrogant delight
Of th' high descent whereof he was yborne,
And through presumption of his matchlesse might,
All other powres and knighthood he did scorne.
Such now he marcheth to this man forlorne,
And left to losse: his stalking steps are stayde
Upon a snaggy oke, which he had torne
Out of his mothers bowelles, and it made
His mortall mace, wherewith his foemen he dismayde.

XI

That when the knight he spyde, he gan advaunce
With huge force and insupportable mayne,
And towardes him with dreadfull fury praunce;
Who haplesse, and eke hopelesse, all in vaine
Did to him pace, sad battaile to darrayne,
Disarmd, disgraste, and inwardly dismayde,
And eke so faint in every joynt and vayne,
Through that fraile fountain, which him feeble made,
That scarsely could he weeld his bootlesse single blade.

XII

The geaunt strooke so maynly mercilesse,
That could have overthrowne a stony towre,
And were not hevenly grace, that him did blesse,
He had beene pouldred all, as thin as flowre:
But he was wary of that deadly stowre,
And lightly lept from underneath the blow:
Yet so exceeding was the villeins powre
That with the winde it did him overthrow,
And all his sences stoond, that still he lay full low.

XIII

As when that divelish yron engin, wrought
In deepest hell, and framd by furies skill,
With windy nitre and quick sulphur fraught,
And ramd with bollet rownd, ordaind to kill,
Conceiveth fyre, the heavens it doth fill
With thundring noyse, and all the ayre doth choke,
That none can breath, nor see, nor heare at will,

Through smouldry cloud of duskish stinck-
ing smok,
That th' onely breath him daunts, who hath
escapt the stroke.

XIV

So daunted when the geaunt saw the knight,
His heavie hand he heaved up on hye,
And him to dust thought to have battred
quight,
Untill Duessa loud to him gan crye,
'O great Orgoglio, greatest under skye,
O hold thy mortall hand for ladies sake!
Hold for my sake, and doe him not to dye,
But vanquisht thine eternall bondslave
make,
And me, thy worthy meed, unto thy leman
take.'

XV

He hearkned, and did stay from further
harmes,
To gayne so goodly guerdon as she spake:
So willingly she came into his armes,
Who her as willingly to grace did take,
And was possessed of his newfound make.
Then up he tooke the slombred sencelesse
corse,
And ere he could out of his swowne awake,
Him to his castle brought with hastie forse,
And in a dongeon deep him threw without
remorse.

XVI

From that day forth Duessa was his deare,
And highly honourd in his haughtie eye;
He gave her gold and purple pall to weare,
And triple crowne set on her head full hye,
And her endowd with royall majestye:
Then, for to make her dreaded more of
men,
And peoples hartes with awfull terror tye,
A monstrous beast ybredd in filthy fen
He chose, which he had kept long time in
darksom den.

XVII

Such one it was, as that renowmed snake
Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,
Long fostred in the filth of Lerna lake,
Whose many heades out budding ever new
Did breed him endlesse labor to subdew:
But this same monster much more ugly
was;
For seven great heads out of his body grew,
An yron brest, and back of scaly bras,
And all embrewd in blood, his eyes did
shine as glas.

XVIII

His tayle was stretched out in wondrous
length,
That to the hous of hevenly gods it raught,
And with extorted powre, and borrow'd
strength,
The everburning lamps from thence it
braught,
And prowdly threw to ground, as things of
naught;
And underneath his filthy feet did tread
The sacred thinges, and holy heastes fore-
taught.
Upon this dreadfull beast with sevenfold
head
He sett the false Duessa, for more aw and
dread.

XIX

The wofull dwarfe, which saw his maisters
fall,
Whiles he had keeping of his grasing steed,
And valiant knight become a caytive thrall,
When all was past, tooke up his forlorne
weed;
His mightie armour, missing most at need;
His silver shield, now idle maisterlesse;
His poynant speare, that many made to
bleed;
The ruefull moniments of heavinesse;
And with them all departes, to tell his
great distresse.

XX

He had not travaild long, when on the way
He wofull lady, wofull Una, met,
Fast flying from the Paynims greedy pray,
Whilest Satyrane him from pursuit did let:
Who when her eyes she on the dwarf had
set,
And saw the signes, that deadly tydinges
spake,
She fell to ground for sorrowfull regret,
And lively breath her sad brest did forsake,
Yet might her pitteous hart be seene to pant
and quake.

XXI

The messenger of so unhappie newes
Would faine have dyde; dead was his hart
within;

Yet outwardly some little comfort shewes:
At last recovering hart, he does begin
To rubb her temples, and to chaufe her chin,
And everie tender part does tosse and turne:
So hardly he the flitted life does win,
Unto her native prison to retourne:
Then gins her grieved ghost thus to lament and mourne:

XXII

'Ye dreary instruments of dolefull sight,
That doe this deadly spectacle behold,
Why do ye lenger feed on loathed light,
Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould,
Sith cruell fates the carefull threds unfould,
The which my life and love together tyde?
Now let the stony dart of sencelesse cold
Perce to my hart, and pas through everie side,
And let eternall night so sad sight fro me hyde.

XXIII

'O lightsome day, the lampe of highest Jove,
First made by him, mens wandring wayes to guyde,
When darknesse he in deepest dongeon drove,
Henceforth thy hated face for ever hyde,
And shut up heavens windowes shyning wyde:
For earthly sight can nought but sorow breed,
And late repentance, which shall long abyde.
Mine eyes no more on vanitie shall feed,
But, seeled up with death, shall have their deadly meed.'

XXIV

Then downe againe she fell unto the ground;
But he her quickly reared up againe:
Thrise did she sinke adowne in deadly swownd,
And thrise he her reviv'd with busie paine:
At last, when life recover'd had the raine,
And over-wrestled his strong enimy,
With foltring tong, and trembling everie vaine,
'Tell on,' quoth she, 'the wofull tragedy,
The which these reliques sad present unto mine eye.

XXV

'Tempestuous Fortune hath spent all her spight,
And thrilling Sorrow throwne his utmost dart;
Thy sad tong cannot tell more heavy plight
Then that I feele, and harbour in mine hart:
Who hath endur'd the whole, can beare ech part.
If death it be, it is not the first wound,
That launched hath my brest with bleeding smart.
Begin, and end the bitter balefull stound;
If lesse then that I feare, more favour I have found.'

XXVI

Then gan the dwarfe the whole discourse declare:
The subtile traines of Archimago old;
The wanton loves of false Fidessa fayre,
Bought with the blood of vanquisht Paynim bold;
The wretched payre transformd to treen mould;
The House of Pryde, and perilles round about;
The combat, which he with Sansjoy did hould;
The lucklesse conflict with the gyaunt stout,
Wherein captiv'd, of life or death he stood in doubt.

XXVII

She heard with patience all unto the end,
And strove to maister sorrowfull assay,
Which greater grew, the more she did contend,
And almost rent her tender hart in tway;
And love fresh coles unto her fire did lay:
For greater love, the greater is the losse.
Was never lady loved dearer day,
Then she did love the Knight of the Red-crosse;
For whose deare sake so many troubles her did tosse.

XXVIII

At last, when fervent sorrow slaked was,
She up arose, resolving him to find,
Alive or dead; and forward forth doth pas,
All as the dwarfe the way to her assynd;
And ever more, in constant carefull mind,
She fedd her wound with fresh renewed bale:

Long tost with stormes, and bet with bitter wind,
High over hills, and lowe adowne the dale,
She wandred many a wood, and measurd many a vale.

XXIX

At last she chaunced by good hap to meet
A goodly knight, faire marching by the way,
Together with his squyre, arayed meet:
His glitterand armour shined far away,
Like glauncing light of Phœbus brightest ray;
From top to toe no place appeared bare,
That deadly dint of steele endanger may:
Athwart his brest a bauldrick brave he ware,
That shind, like twinkling stars, with stones most pretious rare.

XXX

And in the midst thereof, one pretious stone
Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous mights,
Shapt like a ladies head, exceeding shone,
Like Hesperus emongst the lesser lights,
And strove for to amaze the weaker sights:
Thereby his mortall blade full comely hong
In yvory sheath, ycarv'd with curious slights;
Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle strong
Of mother perle, and buckled with a golden tong.

XXXI

His haughtie helmet, horrid all with gold,
Both glorious brightnesse and great terrour bredd;
For all the crest a dragon did enfold
With greedie pawes, and over all did spredd
His golden winges: his dreadfull hideous hedd,
Close couched on the bever, seemd to throw
From flaming mouth bright sparckles fiery redd,
That suddeine horrour to faint hartes did show;
And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his back full low.

XXXII

Upon the top of all his loftie crest,
A bounch of heares discolourd diversly,
With sprincled pearle and gold full richly drest,
Did shake, and seemd to daunce for jollity;
Like to an almond tree ymounted hye
On top of greene Selinis all alone,
With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
Whose tender locks do tremble every one
At everie little breath, that under heaven is blowne.

XXXIII

His warlike shield all closely cover'd was,
Ne might of mortall eye be ever seene;
Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras;
Such earthly mettals soone consumed beene;
But all of diamond perfect pure and cleene
It framed was, one massy entire mould,
Hewen out of adamant rocke with engines keene,
That point of speare it never percen could,
Ne dint of direfull sword divide the substance would.

XXXIV

The same to wight he never wont disclose,
But when as monsters huge he would dismay,
Or daunt unequall armies of his foes,
Or when the flying heavens he would affray:
For so exceeding shone his glistring ray,
That Phœbus golden face it did attaint,
As when a cloud his beames doth over-lay;
And silver Cynthia wexed pale and faynt,
As when her face is staynd with magicke arts constraint.

XXXV

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
Nor bloody wordes of bold enchaunters call,
But all that was not such as seemd in sight
Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall:
And when him list the raskall routes appall,
Men into stones therewith he could transmew,
And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all;
And when him list the prouder lookes subdew,
He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.

XXXVI

Ne let it seeme that credence this exceedes;
For he that made the same was knowne right well
To have done much more admirable deedes.
It Merlin was, which whylome did excell
All living wightes in might of magicke spell:
Both shield, and sword, and armour all he wrought
For this young Prince, when first to armes he fell;
But when he dyde, the Faery Queene it brought
To Faerie Lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought.

XXXVII

A gentle youth, his dearely loved squire,
His speare of heben wood behind him bare,
Whose harmeful head, thrise heated in the fire,
Had riven many a brest with pikehead square;
A goodly person, and could menage faire
His stubborne steed with curbed canon bitt,
Who under him did trample as the aire,
And chauft, that any on his backe should sitt;
The yron rowels into frothy fome he bitt.

XXXVIII

Whenas this knight nigh to the lady drew,
With lovely court he gan her entertaine;
But when he heard her aunswers loth, he knew
Some secret sorrow did her heart distraine:
Which to allay, and calme her storming paine,
Faire feeling words he wisely gan display,
And for her humor fitting purpose faine,
To tempt the cause it selfe for to bewray;
Wherewith enmovd, these bleeding words she gan to say:

XXXIX

'What worlds delight, or joy of living speach,
Can hart, so plungd in sea of sorrowes deep,
And heaped with so huge misfortunes, reach?
The carefull cold beginneth for to creep,
And in my heart his yron arrow steep,
Soone as I thinke upon my bitter bale:
Such helplesse harmes yts better hidden keep,
Then rip up griefe, where it may not availe;
My last left comfort is, my woes to weepe and waile.'

XL

'Ah! lady deare,' quoth then the gentle knight,
'Well may I ween your grief is wondrous great;
For wondrous great griefe groneth in my spright,
Whiles thus I heare you of your sorrowes treat.
But, woefull lady, let me you intrete
For to unfold the anguish of your hart:
Mishaps are maistred by advice discrete,
And counsell mitigates the greatest smart;
Found never help, who never would his hurts impart.'

XLI

'O but,' quoth she, 'great griefe will not be tould,
And can more easily be thought then said.'
'Right so,' quoth he; 'but he, that never would,
Could never: will to might gives greatest aid.'
'But griefe,' quoth she, 'does greater grow displaid,
If then it find not helpe, and breeds despaire.'
'Despaire breeds not,' quoth he, 'where faith is staid.'
'No faith so fast,' quoth she, 'but flesh does paire.'
'Flesh may empaire,' quoth he, 'but reason can repaire.'

XLII

His goodly reason and well guided speach
So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
That her perswaded to disclose the breach,
Which love and fortune in her heart had wrought,
And said: 'Faire sir, I hope good hap hath brought
You to inquere the secrets of my griefe,
Or that your wisedome will direct my thought,
Or that your prowesse can me yield reliefe:
Then heare the story sad, which I shall tell you briefe.

XLIII

'The forlorne maiden, whom your eies have seene
The laughing stocke of Fortunes mockeries,
Am th' onely daughter of a king and queene;
Whose parents deare, whiles equal destinies
Did ronne about, and their felicities
The favourable heavens did not envy,
Did spred their rule through all the territories,
Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by,
And Gehons golden waves doe wash continually.

XLIV

'Till that their cruell cursed enemy,
An huge great dragon, horrible in sight,
Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary,
With murdrous ravine, and devouring might,
Their kingdome spoild, and countrey wasted quight:
Themselves, for feare into his jawes to fall,
He forst to castle strong to take their flight,
Where, fast embard in mighty brasen wall,
He has them now fowr years besiegd, to make them thrall.

XLV

'Full many knights, adventurous and stout,
Have enterprizd that monster to subdew;
From every coast, that heaven walks about,
Have thither come the noble martial crew,
That famous harde atchievements still pursew;
Yet never any could that girlond win,
But all still shronke, and still he greater grew:
All they for want of faith, or guilt of sin,
The pitteous pray of his fiers cruelty have bin.

XLVI

'At last, yled with far reported praise,
Which flying fame throughout the world had spred,
Of doughty knights, whom Fary Land did raise,
That noble order hight of Maidenhed,
Forthwith to court of Gloriane I sped,
Of Gloriane, great queene of glory bright,
Whose kingdomes seat Cleopolis is red,
There to obtaine some such redoubted knight,
That parents deare from tyrants powre deliver might.

XLVII

'Yt was my chaunce (my chaunce was faire and good)
There for to find a fresh unproved knight,
Whose manly hands imbrewd in guilty blood
Had never beene, ne ever by his might
Had throwne to ground the unregarded right:
Yet of his prowesse proofe he since hath made
(I witnes am) in many a cruell fight;
The groning ghosts of many one dismaide
Have felt the bitter dint of his avenging blade.

XLVIII

'And ye, the forlorne reliques of his powre,
His biting sword, and his devouring speare,
Which have endured many a dreadfull stowre,
Can speake his prowesse, that did earst you beare,
And well could rule: now he hath left you heare,
To be the record of his ruefull losse,
And of my dolefull disaventurous deare:
O heavie record of the good Redcrosse,
Where have yee left your lord, that could so well you tosse?

XLIX

'Well hoped I, and faire beginnings had,
That he my captive languor should redeeme;
Till, all unweeting, an enchaunter bad
His sence abusd, and made him to misdeeme
My loyalty, not such as it did seeme,
That rather death desire then such despight.
Be judge, ye heavens, that all things right esteeme,
How I him lov'd, and love with all my might!
So thought I eke of him, and think I thought aright.

L

'Thenceforth me desolate he quite forsooke,
To wander where wilde fortune would me lead,
And other bywaies he himselfe betooke,
Where never foote of living wight did tread,

That brought not backe the balefull body dead;
In which him chaunced false Duessa meete,
Mine onely foe, mine onely deadly dread,
Who with her witchcraft, and misseeming sweete,
Inveigled him to follow her desires unmeete.

LI

'At last, by subtile sleights she him betraid
Unto his foe, a gyaunt huge and tall;
Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismaid,
Unwares surprised, and with mighty mall
The monster mercilesse him made to fall,
Whose fall did never foe before behold;
And now in darkesome dungeon, wretched thrall,
Remedilesse, for aie he doth him hold;
This is my cause of griefe, more great then may be told.'

LII

Ere she had ended all, she gan to faint;
But he her comforted, and faire bespake:
'Certes, madame, ye have great cause of plaint,
That stoutest heart, I weene, could cause to quake.
But be of cheare, and comfort to you take:
For till I have acquitt your captive knight,
Assure your selfe, I will you not forsake.'
His chearefull words reviv'd her chearelesse spright:
So forth they went, the dwarfe them guiding ever right.

## CANTO VIII

Faire virgin, to redeeme her deare,
Brings Arthure to the fight:
Who slayes the gyaunt, wounds the beast,
And strips Duessa quight.

I

Ay me! how many perils doe enfold
The righteous man, to make him daily fall,
Were not that Heavenly Grace doth him uphold,
And stedfast Truth acquite him out of all!
Her love is firme, her care continuall,
So oft as he, through his own foolish pride
Or weaknes, is to sinfull bands made thrall:
Els should this Redcrosse Knight in bands have dyde,
For whose deliverance she this Prince doth thether guyd.

II

They sadly traveild thus, untill they came
Nigh to a castle builded strong and hye:
Then cryde the dwarfe, 'Lo! yonder is the same,
In which my lord, my liege, doth lucklesse ly,
Thrall to that gyaunts hatefull tyranny:
Therefore, deare sir, your mightie powres assay.'
The noble knight alighted by and by
From loftie steed, and badd the ladie stay,
To see what end of fight should him befall that day.

III

So with the squire, th' admirer of his might,
He marched forth towardes that castle wall;
Whose gates he fownd fast shutt, ne living wight
To warde the same, nor answere commers call.
Then tooke that squire an horne of bugle small,
Which hong adowne his side in twisted gold
And tasselles gay. Wyde wonders over all
Of that same hornes great vertues weren told,
Which had approved bene in uses manifold.

IV

Was never wight that heard that shrilling sownd,
But trembling feare did feel in every vaine:
Three miles it might be easy heard arownd,
And ecchoes three aunswerd it selfe againe.
No false enchauntment, nor deceiptfull traine
Might once abide the terror of that blast,
But presently was void and wholly vaine:
No gate so strong, no locke so firme and fast,
But with that percing noise flew open quite, or brast.

V

The same before the geaunts gate he blew,
That all the castle quaked from the grownd,
And every dore of freewill open flew:
The gyaunt selfe dismaied with that sownd,

Where he with his Duessa dalliaunce
fownd,
In hast came rushing forth from inner
bowre,
With staring countenance sterne, as one as-
townd,
And staggering steps, to weet what suddein
stowre
Had wrought that horror strange, and
dar'd his dreaded powre.

VI

And after him the proud Duessa came,
High mounted on her many headed beast;
And every head with fyrie tongue did flame,
And every head was crowned on his creast,
And bloody mouthed with late cruell feast.
That when the knight beheld, his mightie
shild
Upon his manly arme he soone addrest,
And at him fiersly flew, with corage fild,
And eger greedinesse through every mem-
ber thrild.

VII

Therewith the gyant buckled him to fight,
Inflamd with scornefull wrath and high dis-
daine,
And lifting up his dreadfull club on hight,
All armd with ragged snubbes and knottie
graine,
Him thought at first encounter to have
slaine.
But wise and wary was that noble pere,
And lightly leaping from so monstrous
maine,
Did fayre avoide the violence him nere;
It booted nought to thinke such thunder-
bolts to beare.

VIII

Ne shame he thought to shonne so hideous
might.
The ydle stroke, enforcing furious way,
Missing the marke of his misaymed sight,
Did fall to ground, and with his heavy
sway
So deepely dinted in the driven clay,
That three yardes deepe a furrow up did
throw:
The sad earth, wounded with so sore assay,
Did grone full grievous underneath the
blow,
And trembling with strange feare, did like
an erthquake show.

IX

As when almightie Jove, in wrathfull mood,
To wreake the guilt of mortall sins is bent,
Hurles forth his thundring dart with deadly
food,
Enrold in flames, and smouldring dreri-
ment,
Through riven cloudes and molten firma-
ment;
The fiers threeforked engin, making way,
Both loftie towres and highest trees hath
rent,
And all that might his angry passage stay,
And shooting in the earth, castes up a
mount of clay.

X

His boystrous club, so buried in the grownd,
He could not rearen up againe so light,
But that the knight him at advantage fownd,
And whiles he strove his combred clubbe to
quight
Out of the earth, with blade all burning
bright
He smott of his left arme, which like a
block
Did fall to ground, depriv'd of native
might:
Large streames of blood out of the truncked
stock
Forth gushed, like fresh water streame
from riven rocke.

XI

Dismayed with so desperate deadly wound,
And eke impatient of unwonted payne,
He lowdly brayd with beastly yelling
sownd,
That all the fieldes rebellowed againe:
As great a noyse, as when in Cymbrian
plaine
An heard of bulles, whom kindly rage doth
sting,
Doe for the milky mothers want complaine,
And fill the fieldes with troublous bellow-
ing:
The neighbor woods arownd with hollow
murmur ring.

XII

That when his deare Duessa heard, and saw
The evill stownd that daungerd her estate,
Unto his aide she hastily did draw
Her dreadfull beast, who, swolne with
blood of late,

Came ramping forth with proud presumpteous gate,
And threatned all his heades like flaming brandes.
But him the squire made quickly to retrate,
Encountring fiers with single sword in hand,
And twixt him and his lord did like a bulwarke stand.

XIII

The proud Duessa, full of wrathfull spight
And fiers disdaine, to be affronted so,
Enforst her purple beast with all her might,
That stop out of the way to overthroe,
Scorning the let of so unequall foe:
But nathemore would that corageous swayne
To her yeeld passage, gainst his lord to goe,
But with outrageous strokes did him restraine,
And with his body bard the way atwixt them twaine.

XIV

Then tooke the angrie witch her golden cup,
Which still she bore, replete with magick artes;
Death and despeyre did many thereof sup,
And secret poyson through their inner partes,
Th' eternall bale of heavie wounded harts;
Which, after charmes and some enchauntments said,
She lightly sprinkled on his weaker partes;
Therewith his sturdie corage soone was quayd,
And all his sences were with suddein dread dismayd.

XV

So downe he fell before the cruell beast,
Who on his neck his bloody clawes did seize,
That life nigh crusht out of his panting brest:
No powre he had to stirre, nor will to rize.
That when the carefull knight gan well avise,
He lightly left the foe with whom he fought,
And to the beast gan turne his enterprise;
For wondrous anguish in his hart it wrought,
To see his loved squyre into such thraldom brought.

XVI

And high advauncing his blood-thirstie blade,
Stroke one of those deformed heades so sore,
That of his puissaunce proud ensample made;
His monstrous scalpe downe to his teeth it tore,
And that misformed shape misshaped more:
A sea of blood gusht from the gaping wownd,
That her gay garments staynd with filthy gore,
And overflowed all the field arownd;
That over shoes in blood he waded on the grownd.

XVII

Thereat he rored for exceeding paine,
That, to have heard, great horror would have bred,
And scourging th' emptie ayre with his long trayne,
Through great impatience of his grieved hed,
His gorgeous ryder from her loftie sted
Would have cast downe, and trodd in durty myre,
Had not the gyaunt soone her succoured;
Who, all enrag'd with smart and frantick yre,
Came hurtling in full fiers, and forst the knight retyre.

XVIII

The force, which wont in two to be disperst,
In one alone left hand he now unites,
Which is through rage more strong then both were erst;
With which his hideous club aloft he dites,
And at his foe with furious rigor smites,
That strongest oake might seeme to overthrow:
The stroke upon his shield so heavie lites,
That to the ground it doubleth him full low:
What mortall wight could ever beare so monstrous blow?

XIX

And in his fall his shield, that covered was,
Did loose his vele by chaunce, and open flew:

The light whereof, that hevens light did pas,
Such blazing brightnesse through the ayer threw,
That eye mote not the same endure to vew.
Which when the gyaunt spyde with staring eye,
He downe let fall his arme, and soft withdrew
His weapon huge, that heaved was on hye,
For to have slain the man, that on the ground did lye.

XX

And eke the fruitfull-headed beast, amazd
At flashing beames of that sunshiny shield,
Became stark blind, and all his sences dazd,
That downe he tumbled on the durtie field,
And seemd himselfe as conquered to yield.
Whom when his maistresse proud perceiv'd to fall,
Whiles yet his feeble feet for faintnesse reeld,
Unto the gyaunt lowdly she gan call,
'O helpe, Orgoglio, helpe! or els we perish all.'

XXI

At her so pitteous cry was much amoov'd
Her champion stout, and for to ayde his frend,
Againe his wonted angry weapon proov'd:
But all in vaine: for he has redd his end
In that bright shield, and all his forces spend
Them selves in vaine: for since that glauncing sight,
He hath no poure to hurt, nor to defend;
As where th' Almighties lightning brond does light,
It dimmes the dazed eyen, and daunts the sences quight.

XXII

Whom when the Prince, to batteill new addrest
And threatning high his dreadfull stroke, did see,
His sparkling blade about his head he blest,
And smote off quite his right leg by the knee,
That downe he tombled; as an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky clift,
Whose hartstrings with keene steele nigh hewen be;
The mightie trunck halfe rent, with ragged rift
Doth roll adowne the rocks, and fall with fearefull drift.

XXIII

Or as a castle, reared high and round,
By subtile engins and malitious slight
Is undermined from the lowest ground,
And her foundation forst, and feebled quight,
At last downe falles, and with her heaped hight
Her hastie ruine does more heavie make,
And yields it selfe unto the victours might;
Such was this gyaunts fall, that seemd to shake
The stedfast globe of earth, as it for feare did quake.

XXIV

The knight then, lightly leaping to the pray,
With mortall steele him smot againe so sore,
That headlesse his unweldy bodie lay,
All wallowd in his owne fowle bloody gore,
Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous store.
But soone as breath out of his brest did pas,
That huge great body, which the gyaunt bore,
Was vanisht quite, and of that monstrous mas
Was nothing left, but like an emptie blader was.

XXV

Whose grievous fall when false Duessa spyde,
Her golden cup she cast unto the ground,
And crowned mitre rudely threw asyde;
Such percing griefe her stubborne hart did wound,
That she could not endure that dolefull stound,
But leaving all behind her, fled away:
The light-foot squyre her quickly turnd around,
And by hard meanes enforcing her to stay,
So brought unto his lord, as his deserved pray.

XXVI

The roiall virgin, which beheld from farre,
In pensive plight and sad perplexitie,

The whole atchievement of this doubtfull warre,
Came running fast to greet his victorie,
With sober gladnesse and myld modestie,
And with sweet joyous cheare him thus bespake:
'Fayre braunch of noblesse, flowre of chevalrie,
That with your worth the world amazed make,
How shall I quite the paynes, ye suffer for my sake?

XXVII

'And you, fresh budd of vertue springing fast,
Whom these sad eyes saw nigh unto deaths dore,
What hath poore virgin for such perill past
Wherewith you to reward? Accept therefore
My simple selfe, and service evermore:
And He that high does sit, and all things see
With equall eye, their merites to restore,
Behold what ye this day have done for mee,
And what I cannot quite, requite with usuree.

XXVIII

'But sith the heavens, and your faire handeling,
Have made you master of the field this day,
Your fortune maister eke with governing,
And well begonne end all so well, I pray.
Ne let that wicked woman scape away;
For she it is, that did my lord bethrall,
My dearest lord, and deepe in dongeon lay,
Where he his better dayes hath wasted all.
O heare, how piteous he to you for ayd does call.'

XXIX

Forthwith he gave in charge unto his squyre,
That scarlot whore to keepen carefully;
Whyles he himselfe with greedie great desyre
Into the castle entred forcibly;
Where living creature none he did espye.
Then gan he lowdly through the house to call:
But no man car'd to answere to his crye.
There raignd a solemne silence over all,
Nor voice was heard, nor wight was seene in bowre or hall.

XXX

At last, with creeping crooked pace forth came
An old old man, with beard as white as snow,
That on a staffe his feeble steps did frame,
And guyde his wearie gate both too and fro;
For his eye sight him fayled long ygo:
And on his arme a bounch of keyes he bore,
The which unused rust did overgrow:
Those were the keyes of every inner dore,
But he could not them use, but kept them still in store.

XXXI

But very uncouth sight was to behold,
How he did fashion his untoward pace,
For as he forward moovd his footing old,
So backward still was turnd his wrincled face,
Unlike to men, who ever as they trace,
Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.
This was the auncient keeper of that place,
And foster father of the gyaunt dead;
His name Ignaro did his nature right aread.

XXXII

His reverend heares and holy gravitee
The knight much honord, as beseemed well,
And gently askt, where all the people bee,
Which in that stately building wont to dwell:
Who answerd him full soft, *He could not tell.*
Againe he askt, where that same knight was layd,
Whom great Orgoglio with his puissaunce fell
Had made his caytive thrall: againe he sayde,
*He could not tell:* ne ever other answere made.

XXXIII

Then asked he, which way he in might pas:
*He could not tell*, againe he answered.
Thereat the courteous knight displeased was,
And said: 'Old syre, it seemes thou hast not red

How ill it fits with that same silver hed,
In vaine to mocke, or mockt in vaine to bee:
But if thou be, as thou art pourtrahed
With natures pen, in ages grave degree,
Aread in graver wise what I demaund of thee.'

XXXIV

His answere likewise was, *He could not tell.*
Whose sencelesse speach and doted ignorance
When as the noble Prince had marked well,
He ghest his nature by his countenance,
And calmd his wrath with goodly temperance.
Then to him stepping, from his arme did reach
Those keyes, and made himselfe free enterance.
Each dore he opened without any breach;
There was no barre to stop, nor foe him to empeach.

XXXV

There all within full rich arayd he found,
With royall arras and resplendent gold,
And did with store of every thing abound,
That greatest princes presence might behold.
But all the floore (too filthy to be told)
With blood of guiltlesse babes, and innocents trew,
Which there were slaine, as sheepe out of the fold,
Defiled was, that dreadfull was to vew,
And sacred ashes over it was strowed new.

XXXVI

And there beside of marble stone was built
An altare, carv'd with cunning ymagery,
On which trew Christians blood was often spilt,
And holy martyres often doen to dye,
With cruell malice and strong tyranny:
Whose blessed sprites from underneath the stone
To God for vengeance cryde continually,
And with great griefe were often heard to grone,
That hardest heart would bleede to heare their piteous mone.

XXXVII

Through every rowme he sought, and everie bowr,
But no where could he find that wofull thrall:
At last he came unto an yron doore,
That fast was lockt, but key found not at all
Emongst that bounch to open it withall;
But in the same a little grate was pight,
Through which he sent his voyce, and lowd did call
With all his powre, to weet if living wight
Were housed therewithin, whom he enlargen might.

XXXVIII

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring voyce
These pitteous plaintes and dolours did resound:
'O who is that, which bringes me happy choyce
Of death, that here lye dying every stound,
Yet live perforce in balefull darkenesse bound?
For now three moones have changed thrice their hew,
And have beene thrice hid underneath the ground,
Since I the heavens chearefull face did vew.
O welcome, thou, that doest of death bring tydings trew!'

XXXIX

Which when that champion heard, with percing point
Of pitty deare his hart was thrilled sore,
And trembling horrour ran through every joynt,
For ruth of gentle knight so fowle forlore:
Which shaking off, he rent that yron dore,
With furious force and indignation fell;
Where entred in, his foot could find no flore,
But all a deepe descent, as darke as hell,
That breathed ever forth a filthie banefull smell.

XL

But nether darkenesse fowle, nor filthy bands,
Nor noyous smell his purpose could withhold,
(Entire affection hateth nicer hands)
But that with constant zele, and corage bold,
After long paines and labors manifold,

He found the meanes that prisoner up to reare;
Whose feeble thighes, unhable to uphold
His pined corse, him scarse to light could beare,
A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly drere.

XLI

His sad dull eies, deepe sunck in hollow pits,
Could not endure th' unwonted sunne to view;
His bare thin cheekes for want of better bits,
And empty sides deceived of their dew,
Could make a stony hart his hap to rew;
His rawbone armes, whose mighty brawned bowrs
Were wont to rive steele plates, and helmets hew,
Were clene consum'd, and all his vitall powres
Decayd, and al his flesh shronk up like withered flowres.

XLII

Whome when his lady saw, to him she ran
With hasty joy: to see him made her glad,
And sad to view his visage pale and wan,
Who earst in flowres of freshest youth was clad.
Tho, when her well of teares she wasted had,
She said: 'Ah, dearest lord! what evill starre
On you hath frownd, and pourd his influence bad,
That of your selfe ye thus berobbed arre,
And this misseeming hew your manly looks doth marre?

XLIII

'But welcome now, my lord, in wele or woe,
Whose presence I have lackt too long a day;
And fye on Fortune, mine avowed foe,
Whose wrathful wreakes them selves doe now alay,
And for these wronges shall treble penaunce pay
Of treble good: good growes of evils priefe.'
The chearelesse man, whom sorow did dismay,
Had no delight to treaten of his griefe;
His long endured famine needed more reliefe.

XLIV

'Faire lady,' then said that victorious knight,
'The things, that grievous were to doe, or beare,
Them to renew, I wote, breeds no delight;
Best musicke breeds dislike in loathing eare:
But th' only good, that growes of passed feare,
Is to be wise, and ware of like agein.
This daies ensample hath this lesson deare
Deepe written in my heart with yron pen,
That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men.

XLV

'Henceforth, sir knight, take to you wonted strength,
And maister these mishaps with patient might:
Loe wher your foe lies stretcht in monstrous length,
And loe that wicked woman in your sight,
The roote of all your care and wretched plight,
Now in your powre, to let her live, or die.'
'To doe her die,' quoth Una, 'were despight,
And shame t' avenge so weake an enimy;
But spoile her of her scarlot robe, and let her fly.'

XLVI

So, as she bad, that witch they disaraid,
And robd of roiall robes, and purple pall,
And ornaments that richly were displaid;
Ne spared they to strip her naked all.
Then, when they had despoyld her tire and call,
Such as she was, their eies might her behold,
That her misshaped parts did them appall,
A loathly, wrinckled hag, ill favoured, old,
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.

XLVII

Her crafty head was altogether bald,
And, as in hate of honorable eld,

Was overgrowne with scurfe and filthy scald;
Her teeth out of her rotten gummes were feld,
And her sowre breath abhominably smeld;
Her dried dugs, lyke bladders lacking wind,
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld;
Her wrizled skin, as rough as maple rind,
So scabby was, that would have loathd all womankind.

XLVIII

Her neather parts, the shame of all her kind,
My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write:
But at her rompe she growing had behind
A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight;
And eke her feete most monstrous were in sight;
For one of them was like an eagles claw,
With griping talaunts armd to greedy fight,
The other like a beares uneven paw:
More ugly shape yet never living creature saw.

XLIX

Which when the knights beheld, amazd they were,
And wondred at so fowle deformed wight.
'Such then,' said Una, 'as she seemeth here,
Such is the face of Falshood, such the sight
Of fowle Duessa, when her borrowed light
Is laid away, and counterfesaunce knowne.'
Thus when they had the witch disrobed quight,
And all her filthy feature open showne,
They let her goe at will, and wander waies unknowne

L

Shee, flying fast from heavens hated face,
And from the world that her discovered wide,
Fled to the wastfull wildernesse apace,
From living eies her open shame to hide,
And lurkt in rocks and caves, long unespide.
But that faire crew of knights, and Una faire,
Did in that castle afterwards abide,
To rest them selves, and weary powres repaire;
Where store they fownd of al that dainty was and rare.

## CANTO IX

His loves and lignage Arthure tells:
The knights knitt friendly bands:
Sir Trevisan flies from Despeyre,
Whom Redcros Knight withstands.

I

O GOODLY golden chayne! wherewith yfere
The vertues linked are in lovely wize,
And noble mindes of yore allyed were,
In brave poursuitt of chevalrous emprize,
That none did others safety despize,
Nor aid envy to him, in need that stands,
But friendly each did others praise devize
How to advaunce with favourable hands,
As this good Prince redeemd the Redcrosse Knight from bands.

II

Who when their powres, empayrd through labor long,
With dew repast they had recured well,
And that weake captive wight now wexed strong,
Them list no lenger there at leasure dwell,
But forward fare, as their adventures fell:
But ere they parted, Una faire besought
That straunger knight his name and nation tell;
Least so great good, as he for her had wrought,
Should die unknown, and buried be in thankles thought.

III

'Faire virgin,' said the Prince, 'yee me require
A thing without the compas of my witt:
For both the lignage and the certein sire,
From which I sprong, from mee are hidden yitt.
For all so soone as life did me admitt
Into this world, and shewed hevens light,
From mothers pap I taken was unfitt,
And streight deliver'd to a Fary knight,
To be upbrought in gentle thewes and martiall might.

IV

'Unto old Timon he me brought bylive,
Old Timon, who in youthly yeares hath beene
In warlike feates th' expertest man alive,
And is the wisest now on earth I weene:
His dwelling is low in a valley greene,

Under the foot of Rauran mossy hore,
From whence the river Dee, as silver cleene,
His tombling billowes rolls with gentle rore:
There all my daies he traind mee up in vertuous lore.

V

'Thether the great magicien Merlin came,
As was his use, ofttimes to visitt mee;
For he had charge my discipline to frame,
And tutors nouriture to oversee.
Him oft and oft I askt in privity,
Of what loines and what lignage I did spring.
Whose aunswere bad me still assured bee,
That I was sonne and heire unto a king,
As time in her just term the truth to light should bring.'

VI

'Well worthy impe,' said then the lady gent,
'And pupill fitt for such a tutors hand!
But what adventure, or what high intent,
Hath brought you hether into Fary Land,
Aread, Prince Arthure, crowne of martiall band?'
'Full hard it is,' quoth he, 'to read aright
The course of heavenly cause, or understand
The secret meaning of th' Eternall Might,
That rules mens waies, and rules the thoughts of living wight.

VII

'For whether He through fatal deepe foresight
Me hither sent, for cause to me unghest,
Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night
Whilome doth rancle in my riven brest,
With forced fury following his behest,
Me hether brought by wayes yet never found,
You to have helpt I hold my selfe yet blest.'
'Ah! courteous knight,' quoth she, 'what secret wound
Could ever find to grieve the gentlest hart on ground?'

VIII

'Deare dame,' quoth he, 'you sleeping sparkes awake,
Which, troubled once, into huge flames will grow,
Ne ever will their fervent fury slake,
Till living moysture into smoke do flow,
And wasted life doe lye in ashes low.
Yet sithens silence lesseneth not my fire,
But, told, it flames, and, hidden, it does glow,
I will revele what ye so much desire:
Ah Love! lay down thy bow, the whiles I may respyre.

IX

'It was in freshest flowre of youthly yeares,
When corage first does creepe in manly chest;
Then first the cole of kindly heat appeares,
To kindle love in every living brest:
But me had warnd old Timons wise behest,
Those creeping flames by reason to subdew,
Before their rage grew to so great unrest,
As miserable lovers use to rew,
Which still wex old in woe, whiles wo stil wexeth new.

X

'That ydle name of love, and lovers life,
As losse of time, and vertues enimy,
I ever scornd, and joyd to stirre up strife
In middest of their mournfull tragedy,
Ay wont to laugh, when them I heard to cry,
And blow the fire, which them to ashes brent:
Their god himselfe, grievd at my libertie,
Shott many a dart at me with fiers intent,
But I them warded all with wary government.

XI

'But all in vaine: no fort can be so strong,
Ne fleshly brest can armed be so sownd,
But will at last be wonne with battrie long,
Or unawares at disavantage fownd:
Nothing is sure that growes on earthly grownd:
And who most trustes in arme of fleshly might,
And boastes, in beauties chaine not to be bownd,
Doth soonest fall in disaventrous fight,
And yeeldes his caytive neck to victours most despight.

XII

'Ensample make of him your haplesse joy,
And of my selfe now mated, as ye see;

Whose prouder vaunt that proud avenging boy
Did soone pluck downe, and curbd my libertee.
For on a day, prickt forth with jollitee
Of looser life, and heat of hardiment,
Raunging the forest wide on courser free,
The fields, the floods, the heavens, with one consent,
Did seeme to laugh on me, and favour mine intent.

XIII

'Forwearied with my sportes, I did alight
From loftie steed, and downe to sleepe me layd;
The verdant gras my couch did goodly dight,
And pillow was my helmett fayre displayd:
Whiles every sence the humour sweet embayd,
And slombring soft my hart did steale away,
Me seemed, by my side a royall mayd
Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay:
So fayre a creature yet saw never sunny day.

XIV

'Most goodly glee and lovely blandishment
She to me made, and badd me love her deare;
For dearely sure her love was to me bent,
As, when just time expired, should appeare.
But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
Was never hart so ravisht with delight,
Ne living man like wordes did ever heare,
As she to me delivered all that night;
And at her parting said, she Queene of Faries hight.

XV

'When I awoke, and found her place devoyd,
And nought but pressed gras where she had lyen,
I sorrowed all so much as earst I joyd,
And washed all her place with watry eyen.
From that day forth I lov'd that face divyne;
From that day forth I cast in carefull mynd,
To seeke her out with labor and long tyne,
And never vow to rest, till her I fynd:
Nyne monethes I seek in vain, yet ni'll that vow unbynd.'

XVI

Thus as he spake, his visage wexed pale,
And chaunge of hew great passion did bewray;
Yett still he strove to cloke his inward bale,
And hide the smoke that did his fire display;
Till gentle Una thus to him gan say:
'O happy Queene of Faries, that hast fownd,
Mongst many, one that with his prowesse may
Defend thine honour, and thy foes confownd!
True loves are often sown, but seldom grow on grownd.'

XVII

'Thine, O then,' said the gentle Redcrosse Knight,
'Next to that ladies love, shalbe the place,
O fayrest virgin, full of heavenly light,
Whose wondrous faith, exceeding earthly race,
Was firmest fixt in myne extremest case.
And you, my lord, the patrone of my life,
Of that great Queene may well gaine worthie grace:
For onely worthie you through prowes priefe,
Yf living man mote worthie be, to be her liefe.'

XVIII

So diversly discoursing of their loves,
The golden sunne his glistring head gan shew,
And sad remembraunce now the Prince amoves
With fresh desire his voyage to pursew:
Als Una earnd her traveill to renew.
Then those two knights, fast frendship for to bynd,
And love establish each to other trew,
Gave goodly gifts, the signes of gratefull mynd,
And eke, as pledges firme, right hands together joynd.

XIX

Prince Arthur gave a boxe of diamond sure,
Embowd with gold and gorgeous ornament,

Wherein were closd few drops of liquor pure,
Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent,
That any wownd could heale incontinent:
Which to requite, the Redcrosse Knight him gave
A booke, wherein his Saveours Testament
Was writt with golden letters rich and brave;
A worke of wondrous grace, and hable soules to save.

XX

Thus beene they parted, Arthur on his way
To seeke his love, and th' other for to fight
With Unaes foe, that all her realme did pray.
But she, now weighing the decayed plight
And shrunken synewes of her chosen knight,
Would not a while her forward course pursew,
Ne bring him forth in face of dreadfull fight,
Till he recovered had his former hew:
For him to be yet weake and wearie well she knew.

XXI

So as they traveild, lo! they gan espy
An armed knight towards them gallop fast,
That seemed from some feared foe to fly,
Or other griesly thing, that him aghast.
Still as he fledd, his eye was backward cast,
As if his feare still followed him behynd;
Als flew his steed, as he his bandes had brast,
And with his winged heeles did tread the wynd,
As he had beene a fole of Pegasus his kynd.

XXII

Nigh as he drew, they might perceive his head
To bee unarmd, and curld uncombed heares
Upstaring stiffe, dismaid with uncouth dread;
Nor drop of blood in all his face appeares,
Nor life in limbe: and to increase his feares,
In fowle reproch of knighthoodes fayre degree,
About his neck an hempen rope he weares,
That with his glistring armes does ill agree;
But he of rope, or armes, has now no memoree.

XXIII

The Redcrosse Knight toward him crossed fast,
To weet what mister wight was so dismayd:
There him he findes all sencelesse and aghast,
That of him selfe he seemd to be afrayd;
Whom hardly he from flying forward stayd,
Till he these wordes to him deliver might:
'Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus arayd,
And eke from whom make ye this hasty flight?
For never knight I saw in such misseeming plight.'

XXIV

He answerd nought at all, but adding new
Feare to his first amazment, staring wyde
With stony eyes and hartlesse hollow hew,
Astonisht stood, as one that had aspyde
Infernall furies, with their chaines untyde.
Him yett againe, and yett againe bespake
The gentle knight; who nought to him replyde,
But, trembling every joynt, did inly quake,
And foltring tongue at last these words seemd forth to shake:

XXV

'For Gods deare love, sir knight, doe me not stay;
For loe! he comes, he comes fast after mee!'
Eft looking back, would faine have runne away;
But he him forst to stay, and tellen free
The secrete cause of his perplexitie:
Yet nathemore by his bold hartie speach
Could his blood frosen hart emboldened bee,
But through his boldnes rather feare did reach;
Yett, forst, at last he made through silence suddein breach.

XXVI

'And am I now in safetie sure,' quoth he,
'From him that would have forced me to dye?

And is the point of death now turnd fro mee,
That I may tell this haplesse history?'
'Feare nought,' quoth he, 'no daunger now is nye.'
'Then shall I you recount a ruefull cace,'
Said he, 'the which with this unlucky eye
I late beheld; and had not greater grace
Me reft from it, had bene partaker of the place.

XXVII

'I lately chaunst (would I had never chaunst!)
With a fayre knight to keepen companee,
Sir Terwin hight, that well himselfe advaunst
In all affayres, and was both bold and free,
But not so happy as mote happy bee:
He lov'd, as was his lot, a lady gent,
That him againe lov'd in the least degree:
For she was proud, and of too high intent,
And joyd to see her lover languish and lament.

XXVIII

'From whom retourning sad and comfortlesse,
As on the way together we did fare,
We met that villen, (God from him me blesse!)
That cursed wight, from whom I scapt whyleare,
A man of hell, that calls himselfe Despayre:
Who first us greets, and after fayre areedes
Of tydinges straunge, and of adventures rare:
So creeping close, as snake in hidden weedes,
Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deedes.

XXIX

'Which when he knew, and felt our feeble harts
Embost with bale, and bitter byting griefe,
Which love had launched with his deadly darts,
With wounding words, and termes of foule repriefe,
He pluckt from us all hope of dew reliefe,
That earst us held in love of lingring life:
Then hopelesse hartlesse, gan the cunning thiefe
Perswade us dye, to stint all further strife:
To me he lent this rope, to him a rusty knife.

XXX

'With which sad instrument of hasty death,
That wofull lover, loathing lenger light,
A wyde way made to let forth living breath.
But I, more fearefull or more lucky wight,
Dismayd with that deformed dismall sight,
Fledd fast away, halfe dead with dying feare;
Ne yet assur'd of life by you, sir knight,
Whose like infirmity like chaunce may beare:
But God you never let his charmed speaches heare.'

XXXI

'How may a man,' said he, 'with idle speach
Be wonne to spoyle the castle of his health?'
'I wote,' quoth he, 'whom tryall late did teach,
That like would not for all this worldes wealth:
His subtile tong, like dropping honny, mealt'h
Into the heart, and searcheth every vaine,
That ere one be aware, by secret stealth
His powre is reft, and weaknes doth remaine.
O never, sir, desire to try his guilefull traine.'

XXXII

'Certes,' sayd he, 'henee shall I never rest,
Till I that treachours art have heard and tryde;
And you, sir knight, whose name mote I request,
Of grace do me unto his cabin guyde.'
'I that hight Trevisan,' quoth he, 'will ryde
Against my liking backe, to doe you grace:
But nor for gold nor glee will I abyde
By you, when ye arrive in that same place;
For lever had I die, then see his deadly face.'

XXXIII

Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,
Far underneath a craggy clift ypight,
Darke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcases doth crave:
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly owle,
Shrieking his balefull note, which ever drave

Far from that haunt all other chearefull
fowle;
And all about it wandring ghostes did wayle
and howle.

XXXIV

And all about old stockes and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruite nor leafe was ever
seene,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged
beene,
Whose carcases were scattred on the
greene,
And throwne about the cliffs. Arrived there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and
dolefull teene,
Would faine have fled, ne durst approchen
neare,
But th' other forst him staye, and com-
forted in feare.

XXXV

That darkesome cave they enter, where they
find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullein mind:
His griesie lockes, long growen and un-
bound,
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,
And hid his face; through which his hol-
low eyne
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound;
His raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and
pine,
Were shronke into his jawes, as he did
never dyne.

XXXVI

His garment nought but many ragged
clouts,
With thornes together pind and patched
was,
The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts;
And him beside there lay upon the gras
A dreary corse, whose life away did pas,
All wallowd in his own yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas!
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing
flood.

XXXVII

Which piteous spectacle, approving trew
The wofull tale that Trevisan had told,
When as the gentle Redcrosse Knight did
vew,
With firie zeale he burnt in courage bold,
Him to avenge, before his blood were cold;
And to the villein sayd: 'Thou damned
wight,
The authour of this fact we here behold,
What justice can but judge against thee
right,
With thine owne blood to price his blood,
here shed in sight?'

XXXVIII

'What franticke fit,' quoth he, 'hath thus
distraught
Thee, foolish man, so rash a doome to give?
What justice ever other judgement taught,
But he should dye, who merites not to
live?
None els to death this man despayring
drive,
But his owne guiltie mind deserving death.
Is then unjust to each his dew to give?
Or let him dye, that loatheth living breath?
Or let him die at ease, that liveth here un-
eath?

XXXIX

'Who travailes by the wearie wandring
way,
To come unto his wished home in haste,
And meetes a flood, that doth his passage
stay,
Is not great grace to helpe him over past,
Or free his feet, that in the myre sticke
fast?
Most envious man, that grieves at neigh-
bours good,
And fond, that joyest in the woe thou hast!
Why wilt not let him passe, that long hath
stood
Upon the bancke, yet wilt thy selfe not pas
the flood?

XL

'He there does now enjoy eternall rest
And happy ease, which thou doest want and
crave,
And further from it daily wanderest:
What if some little payne the passage have,
That makes frayle flesh to feare the bitter
wave?
Is not short payne well borne, that bringes
long ease,
And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet grave?

Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please.'

XLI

The knight much wondred at his suddeine wit,
And sayd: 'The terme of life is limited,
Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it:
The souldier may not move from watchfull sted,
Nor leave his stand, untill his captaine bed.'
'Who life did limit by almightie doome,'
Quoth he, 'knowes best the termes established;
And he that points the centonell his roome,
Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome.

XLII

'Is not His deed, what ever thing is donne
In heaven and earth? Did not He all create,
To die againe? All ends, that was begonne.
Their times in His eternall booke of fate
Are written sure, and have their certein date.
Who then can strive with strong necessitie,
That holds the world in his still chaunging state,
Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie?
When houre of death is come, let none aske whence, nor why.

XLIII

'The lenger life, I wote, the greater sin,
The greater sin, the greater punishment:
All those great battels, which thou boasts to win,
Through strife, and blood-shed, and avengement,
Now praysd, hereafter deare thou shalt repent:
For life must life, and blood must blood repay.
Is not enough thy evill life forespent?
For he that once hath missed the right way,
The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray.

XLIV

'Then doe no further goe, no further stray,
But here ly downe, and to thy rest betake,
Th' ill to prevent, that life ensewen may.
For what hath life, that may it loved make,
And gives not rather cause it to forsake?
Feare, sicknesse, age, losse, labour, sorrow, strife,
Payne, hunger, cold, that makes the hart to quake;
And ever fickle Fortune rageth rife;
All which, and thousands mo, do make a loathsome life.

XLV

'Thou, wretched man, of death hast greatest need,
If in true ballaunce thou wilt weigh thy state:
For never knight, that dared warlike deed,
More luckless dissaventures did amate:
Witnes the dungeon deepe, wherein of late
Thy life shutt up for death so oft did call;
And though good lucke prolonged hath thy date,
Yet death then would the like mishaps forestall,
Into the which heareafter thou maist happen fall.

XLVI

'Why then doest thou, O man of sin, desire
To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?
Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire
High heaped up with huge iniquitee,
Against the day of wrath, to burden thee?
Is not enough, that to this lady mild
Thou falsed hast thy faith with perjuree,
And sold thy selfe to serve Duessa vild,
With whom in al abuse thou hast thy selfe defild?

XLVII

'Is not He just, that all this doth behold
From highest heven, and beares an equall eie?
Shall He thy sins up in His knowledge fold,
And guilty be of thine impietie?
Is not His lawe, Let every sinner die:
Die shall all flesh? What then must needs be donne,
Is it not better to doe willinglie,
Then linger till the glas be all out ronne?
Death is the end of woes: die soone, O Faries sonne.'

XLVIII

The knight was much enmoved with his speach,
That as a swords poynt through his hart did perse,

And in his conscience made a secrete breach,
Well knowing trew all that he did rehearse;
And to his fresh remembraunce did reverse
The ugly vew of his deformed crimes,
That all his manly powres it did disperse,
As he were charmed with inchaunted rimes,
That oftentimes he quakt, and fainted oftentimes.

XLIX

In which amazement when the miscreaunt
Perceived him to waver, weake and fraile,
Whiles trembling horror did his conscience daunt,
And hellish anguish did his soule assaile,
To drive him to despaire, and quite to quaile,
Hee shewd him, painted in a table plaine,
The damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile,
And thousand feends, that doe them endlesse paine
With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remaine.

L

The sight whereof so throughly him dismaid,
That nought but death before his eies he saw,
And ever burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th' Almighties law:
Then gan the villein him to overcraw,
And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw;
And bad him choose, what death he would desire:
For death was dew to him, that had provokt Gods ire.

LI

But whenas none of them he saw him take,
He to him raught a dagger sharpe and keene,
And gave it him in hand: his hand did quake,
And tremble like a leafe of aspin greene,
And troubled blood through his pale face was seene
To come and goe, with tidings from the heart,
As it a ronning messenger had beene.
At last, resolv'd to worke his finall smart,
He lifted up his hand, that backe againe did start.

LII

Which whenas Una saw, through every vaine
The crudled cold ran to her well of life,
As in a swowne: but soone reliv'd againe,
Out of his hand she snatcht the cursed knife,
And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,
And to him said: 'Fie, fie, faint hearted knight!
What meanest thou by this reprochfull strife?
Is this the battaile, which thou vauntst to fight
With that fire-mouthed dragon, horrible and bright?

LIII

'Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,
Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart,
Ne divelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright.
In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?
Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?
Where justice growes, there grows eke greter grace,
The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
And that accurst hand-writing doth deface.
Arise, sir knight, arise, and leave this cursed place.'

LIV

So up he rose, and thence amounted streight.
Which when the carle beheld, and saw his guest
Would safe depart, for all his subtile sleight,
He chose an halter from among the rest,
And with it hong him selfe, unbid unblest.
But death he could not worke himselfe thereby;
For thousand times he so him selfe had drest,
Yet nathelesse it could not doe him die,
Till he should die his last, that is, eternally.

## CANTO X

Her faithfull knight faire Una brings
To House of Holinesse,
Where he is taught repentaunce, and
The way to hevenly blesse.

I

What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might,
And vaine assuraunce of mortality,
Which, all so soone as it doth come to fight
Against spirituall foes, yields by and by,
Or from the fielde most cowardly doth fly?
Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gained victory.
If any strength we have, it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will.

II

By that which lately hapned, Una saw
That this her knight was feeble, and too faint;
And all his sinewes woxen weake and raw,
Through long enprisonment, and hard constraint,
Which he endured in his late restraint,
That yet he was unfitt for bloody fight:
Therefore to cherish him with diets daint,
She cast to bring him, where he chearen might,
Till he recovered had his late decayed plight.

III

There was an auncient house not far away,
Renowmd throughout the world for sacred lore
And pure unspotted life: so well, they say,
It governd was, and guided evermore,
Through wisedome of a matrone grave and hore;
Whose onely joy was to relieve the needes
Of wretched soules, and helpe the helpelesse pore:
All night she spent in bidding of her bedes,
And all the day in doing good and godly deedes.

IV

Dame Cœlia men did her call, as thought
From heaven to come, or thether to arise;
The mother of three daughters, well upbrought
In goodly thewes, and godly exercise:
The eldest two, most sober, chast, and wise,
Fidelia and Speranza, virgins were,
Though spousd, yet wanting wedlocks solemnize;
But faire Charissa to a lovely fere
Was lincked, and by him had many pledges dere.

V

Arrived there, the dore they find fast lockt;
For it was warely watched night and day,
For feare of many foes: but when they knockt,
The porter opened unto them streight way.
He was an aged syre, all hory gray,
With lookes full lowly cast, and gate full slow,
Wont on a staffe his feeble steps to stay,
Hight Humiltá. They passe in, stouping low;
For streight and narrow was the way which he did shew.

VI

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin;
But entred in, a spatious court they see,
Both plaine and pleasaunt to be walked in,
Where them does meete a francklin faire and free,
And entertaines with comely courteous glee:
His name was Zele, that him right well became;
For in his speaches and behaveour hee
Did labour lively to expresse the same,
And gladly did them guide, till to the hall they came.

VII

There fayrely them receives a gentle squyre,
Of myld demeanure and rare courtesee,
Right cleanly clad in comely sad attyre;
In word and deede that shewd great modestee,
And knew his good to all of each degree;
Hight Reverence. He them with speaches meet
Does faire entreat; no courting nicetee,
But simple trew, and eke unfained sweet,
As might become a squyre so great persons to greet.

VIII

And afterwardes them to his dame he leades,
That aged dame, the lady of the place:
Who all this while was busy at her beades:
Which doen, she up arose with seemely grace,
And toward them full matronely did pace.
Where when that fairest Una she beheld,
Whom well she knew to spring from hevenly race,
Her heart with joy unwonted inly sweld,
As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker eld:

IX

And her embracing, said: 'O happy earth,
Whereon thy innocent feet doe ever tread,
Most vertuous virgin, borne of hevenly berth,
That to redeeme thy woefull parents head
From tyrans rage, and ever-dying dread,
Hast wandred through the world now long a day,
Yett ceassest not thy weary soles to lead!
What grace hath thee now hether brought this way?
Or doen thy feeble feet unweeting hether stray?

X

'Straunge thing it is an errant knight to see
Here in this place, or any other wight,
That hether turnes his steps: so few there bee,
That chose the narrow path, or seeke the right:
All keepe the broad high way, and take delight
With many rather for to goe astray,
And be partakers of their evill plight,
Then with a few to walke the rightest way.
O foolish men! why hast ye to your owne decay?'

XI

'Thy selfe to see, and tyred limbes to rest,
O matrone sage,' quoth she, 'I hether came,
And this good knight his way with me addrest,
Ledd with thy prayses and broad-blazed fame,
That up to heven is blowne.' The auncient dame
Him goodly greeted in her modest guyse,
And enterteynd them both, as best became,
With all the court'sies that she could devyse,
Ne wanted ought, to shew her bounteous or wise.

XII

Thus as they gan of sondrie thinges devise,
Loe! two most goodly virgins came in place,
Ylinked arme in arme in lovely wise;
With countenance demure, and modest grace,
They numbred even steps and equall pace:
Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight,
Like sunny beames threw from her christall face,
That could have dazd the rash beholders sight,
And round about her head did shine like hevens light.

XIII

She was araied all in lilly white,
And in her right hand bore a cup of gold,
With wine and water fild up to the hight,
In which a serpent did himselfe enfold,
That horrour made to all that did behold;
But she no whitt did chaunge her constant mood:
And in her other hand she fast did hold
A booke that was both signd and seald with blood,
Wherin darke things were writt, hard to be understood.

XIV

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight,
Was clad in blew, that her beseemed well:
Not all so chearefull seemed she of sight,
As was her sister; whether dread did dwell,
Or anguish, in her hart, is hard to tell:
Upon her arme a silver anchor lay,
Whereon she leaned ever, as befell:
And ever up to heven, as she did pray,
Her stedfast eyes were bent, ne swarved other way.

XV

They, seeing Una, towardes her gan wend,
Who them encounters with like courtesee;
Many kind speeches they betweene them spend,
And greatly joy each other well to see:
Then to the knight with shamefast modestie

They turne themselves, at Unaes meeke request,
And him salute with well beseeming glee;
Who faire them quites, as him beseemed best,
And goodly gan discourse of many a noble gest.

XVI

Then Una thus: 'But she your sister deare,
The deare Charissa, where is she become?
Or wants she health, or busie is elswhere?'
'Ah no,' said they, 'but forth she may not come:
For she of late is lightned of her wombe,
And hath encreast the world with one sonne more,
That her to see should be but troublesome.'
'Indeed,' quoth she, 'that should her trouble sore;
But thankt be God, and her encrease so evermore.'

XVII

Then saide the aged Cœlia: 'Deare dame,
And you, good sir, I wote that of youre toyle
And labors long, through which ye hether came,
Ye both forwearied be: therefore a whyle
I read you rest, and to your bowres recoyle.'
Then called she a groome, that forth him ledd
Into a goodly lodge, and gan despoile
Of puissant armes, and laid in easie bedd:
His name was meeke Obedience rightfully aredd.

XVIII

Now when their wearie limbes with kindly rest,
And bodies were refresht with dew repast,
Fayre Una gan Fidelia fayre request,
To have her knight into her schoolehous plaste,
That of her heavenly learning he might taste,
And heare the wisedom of her wordes divine.
She graunted, and that knight so much agraste,
That she him taught celestiall discipline,
And opened his dull eyes, that light mote in them shine.

XIX

And that her sacred Booke, with blood ywritt,
That none could reade, except she did them teach,
She unto him disclosed every whitt,
And heavenly documents thereout did preach,
That weaker witt of man could never reach,
Of God, of grace, of justice, of free will,
That wonder was to heare her goodly speach:
For she was hable with her wordes to kill,
And rayse againe to life the hart that she did thrill.

XX

And when she list poure out her larger spright,
She would commaund the hasty sunne to stay,
Or backward turne his course from hevens hight:
Sometimes great hostes of men she could dismay;
Dry-shod to passe, she parts the flouds in tway;
And eke huge mountaines from their native seat
She would commaund, themselves to beare away,
And throw in raging sea with roaring threat:
Almightie God her gave such powre and puissaunce great.

XXI

The faithfull knight now grew in litle space,
By hearing her, and by her sisters lore,
To such perfection of all hevenly grace,
That wretched world he gan for to abhore,
And mortall life gan loath, as thing forlore,
Greevd with remembrance of his wicked wayes,
And prickt with anguish of his sinnes so sore,
That he desirde to end his wretched dayes:
So much the dart of sinfull guilt the soule dismayes.

XXII

But wise Speranza gave him comfort sweet,
And taught him how to take assured hold
Upon her silver anchor, as was meet;
Els had his sinnes so great and manifold

Made him forget all that Fidelia told.
In this distressed doubtfull agony,
When him his dearest Una did behold,
Disdeining life, desiring leave to dye,
She found her selfe assayld with great perplexity:

XXIII

And came to Cœlia to declare her smart;
Who, well acquainted with that commune plight,
Which sinfull horror workes in wounded hart,
Her wisely comforted all that she might,
With goodly counsell and advisement right;
And streightway sent with carefull diligence,
To fetch a leach, the which had great insight
In that disease of grieved conscience,
And well could cure the same: his name was Patience.

XXIV

Who, comming to that sowle-diseased knight,
Could hardly him intreat to tell his grief:
Which knowne, and all that noyd his heavie spright
Well searcht, eftsoones he gan apply relief
Of salves and med'cines, which had passing prief,
And there to added wordes of wondrous might:
By which to ease he him recured brief,
And much aswag'd the passion of his plight,
That he his paine endur'd, as seeming now more light.

XXV

But yet the cause and root of all his ill,
Inward corruption and infected sin,
Not purg'd nor heald, behind remained still,
And festring sore did ranckle yett within,
Close creeping twixt the marow and the skin.
Which to extirpe, he laid him privily
Downe in a darksome lowly place far in,
Whereas he meant his corrosives to apply,
And with streight diet tame his stubborne malady.

XXVI

In ashes and sackcloth he did array
His daintie corse, proud humors to abate,
And dieted with fasting every day,
The swelling of his woundes to mitigate,
And made him pray both earely and eke late:
And ever as superfluous flesh did rott,
Amendment readie still at hand did wayt,
To pluck it out with pincers fyrie whott,
That soone in him was lefte no one corrupted jott.

XXVII

And bitter Penaunce, with an yron whip,
Was wont him once to disple every day:
And sharpe Remorse his hart did prick and nip,
That drops of blood thence like a well did play:
And sad Repentance used to embay
His body in salt water smarting sore,
The filthy blottes of sin to wash away.
So in short space they did to health restore
The man that would not live, but erst lay at deathes dore.

XXVIII

In which his torment often was so great,
That like a lyon he would cry and rore,
And rend his flesh, and his owne synewes eat.
His owne deare Una, hearing evermore
His ruefull shriekes and gronings, often tore
Her guiltlesse garments and her golden heare,
For pitty of his payne and anguish sore;
Yet all with patience wisely she did beare;
For well she wist, his cryme could els be never cleare.

XXIX

Whom, thus recover'd by wise Patience
And trew Repentaunce, they to Una brought;
Who, joyous of his cured conscience,
Him dearely kist, and fayrely eke besought
Himselfe to chearish, and consuming thought
To put away out of his carefull brest.
By this Charissa, late in child-bed brought,
Was woxen strong, and left her fruitfull nest;
To her fayre Una brought this unacquainted guest.

XXX

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easie to compare;
Full of great love, but Cupids wanton snare
As hell she hated, chaste in worke and will;
Her necke and brests were ever open bare,
That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill:
The rest was all in yellow robes arayed still.

XXXI

A multitude of babes about her hong,
Playing their sportes, that joyd her to behold;
Whom still she fed, whiles they were weak and young,
But thrust them forth still, as they wexed old:
And on her head she wore a tyre of gold,
Adornd with gemmes and owches wondrous fayre,
Whose passing price uneath was to be told;
And by her syde there sate a gentle payre
Of turtle doves, she sitting in an yvory chayre.

XXXII

The knight and Una, entring, fayre her greet,
And bid her joy of that her happy brood;
Who them requites with court'sies seeming meet,
And entertaynes with friendly chearefull mood.
Then Una her besought, to be so good
As in her vertuous rules to schoole her knight,
Now after all his torment well withstood,
In that sad house of Penaunce, where his spright
Had past the paines of hell and long enduring night.

XXXIII

She was right joyious of her just request,
And taking by the hand that Faeries sonne,
Gan him instruct in everie good behest,
Of love, and righteousnes, and well to donne,
And wrath and hatred warely to shonne,
That drew on men Gods hatred and his wrath,
And many soules in dolours had fordonne:
In which when him she well instructed hath,
From thence to heaven she teacheth him the ready path.

XXXIV

Wherein his weaker wandring steps to guyde,
An auncient matrone she to her does call,
Whose sober lookes her wisedome well descryde:
Her name was Mercy, well knowne over all
To be both gratious and eke liberall:
To whom the carefull charge of him she gave,
To leade aright, that he should never fall
In all his waies through this wide worldes wave,
That Mercy in the end his righteous soule might save.

XXXV

The godly matrone by the hand him beares
Forth from her presence, by a narrow way,
Scattred with bushy thornes and ragged breares,
Which still before him she remov'd away,
That nothing might his ready passage stay:
And ever when his feet encombred were,
Or gan to shrinke, or from the right to stray,
She held him fast, and firmely did upbeare,
As carefull nourse her child from falling oft does reare.

XXXVI

Eftsoones unto an holy hospitall,
That was foreby the way, she did him bring,
In which seven bead-men, that had vowed all
Their life to service of high heavens King,
Did spend their daies in doing godly thing:
Their gates to all were open evermore,
That by the wearie way were traveiling,
And one sate wayting ever them before,
To call in commers by, that needy were and pore.

XXXVII

The first of them, that eldest was and best,
Of all the house had charge and governement,
As guardian and steward of the rest:
His office was to give entertainement

And lodging unto all that came and went:
Not unto such, as could him feast againe,
And double quite for that he on them spent,
But such as want of harbour did constraine:
Those for Gods sake his dewty was to entertaine.

XXXVIII

The second was as almner of the place:
His office was, the hungry for to feed,
And thristy give to drinke, a worke of grace:
He feard not once him selfe to be in need,
Ne car'd to hoord for those whom he did breede:
The grace of God he layd up still in store,
Which as a stocke he left unto his seede;
He had enough; what need him care for more?
And had he lesse, yet some he would give to the pore.

XXXIX

The third had of their wardrobe custody,
In which were not rich tyres, nor garments gay,
The plumes of pride, and winges of vanity,
But clothes meet to keepe keene cold away,
And naked nature seemely to aray;
With which bare wretched wights he dayly clad,
The images of God in earthly clay;
And if that no spare clothes to give he had,
His owne cote he would cut, and it distribute glad.

XL

The fourth appointed by his office was,
Poore prisoners to relieve with gratious ayd,
And captives to redeeme with price of bras,
From Turkes and Sarazins, which them had stayd;
And though they faulty were, yet well he wayd,
That God to us forgiveth every howre
Much more then that, why they in bands were layd,
And He, that harrowd hell with heavie stowre,
The faulty soules from thence brought to his heavenly bowre.

XLI

The fift had charge sick persons to attend,
And comfort those, in point of death which lay;
For them most needeth comfort in the end,
When sin, and hell, and death doe most dismay
The feeble soule departing hence away.
All is but lost, that living we bestow,
If not well ended at our dying day.
O man, have mind of that last bitter throw;
For as the tree does fall, so lyes it ever low.

XLII

The sixt had charge of them now being dead,
In seemely sort their corses to engrave,
And deck with dainty flowres their brydall bed,
That to their heavenly spouse both sweet and brave
They might appeare, when he their soules shall save.
The wondrous workmanship of Gods owne mould,
Whose face He made, all beastes to feare, and gave
All in his hand, even dead we honour should.
Ah! dearest God me graunt, I dead be not defould.

XLIII

The seventh, now after death and buriall done,
Had charge the tender orphans of the dead
And wydowes ayd, least they should be undone:
In face of judgement he their right would plead,
Ne ought the powre of mighty men did dread
In their defence, nor would for gold or fee
Be wonne their rightfull causes downe to tread:
And when they stood in most necessitee,
He did supply their want, and gave them ever free.

XLIV

There when the Elfin knight arrived was,
The first and chiefest of the seven, whose care
Was guests to welcome, towardes him did pas:
Where seeing Mercie, that his steps upbare
And alwaies led, to her with reverence rare
He humbly louted in meeke lowlinesse,
And seemely welcome for her did prepare:

For of their order she was patronesse,
Albe Charissa were their chiefest founderesse.

XLV

There she awhile him stayes, him selfe to rest,
That to the rest more hable he might bee:
During which time, in every good behest
And godly worke of almes and charitee
Shee him instructed with great industree:
Shortly therein so perfect he became,
That, from the first unto the last degree,
His mortall life he learned had to frame
In holy righteousnesse, without rebuke or blame.

XLVI

Thence forward by that painfull way they pas,
Forth to an hill, that was both steepe and hy;
On top whereof a sacred chappell was,
And eke a litle hermitage thereby,
Wherein an aged holy man did lie,
That day and night said his devotion,
Ne other worldly busines did apply:
His name was Hevenly Contemplation;
Of God and goodnes was his meditation.

XLVII

Great grace that old man to him given had;
For God he often saw from heavens hight,
All were his earthly eien both blunt and bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly sight,
Yet wondrous quick and persaunt was his spright,
As eagles eie, that can behold the sunne.
That hill they scale with all their powre and might,
That his fraile thighes, nigh weary and fordonne,
Gan faile; but by her helpe the top at last he wonne.

XLVIII

There they doe finde that godly aged sire,
With snowy lockes adowne his shoulders shed,
As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
The mossy braunches of an oke halfe ded.
Each bone might through his body well be red,
And every sinew seene, through his long fast:
For nought he car'd his carcas long unfed;
His mind was full of spirituall repast,
And pyn'd his flesh, to keepe his body low and chast.

XLIX

Who, when these two approching he aspide,
At their first presence grew agrieved sore,
That forst him lay his hevenly thoughts aside;
And had he not that dame respected more,
Whom highly he did reverence and adore,
He would not once have moved for the knight.
They him saluted, standing far afore;
Who, well them greeting, humbly did requight,
And asked, to what end they clomb that tedious hight.

L

'What end,' quoth she, 'should cause us take such paine,
But that same end, which every living wight
Should make his marke, high heaven to attaine?
Is not from hence the way, that leadeth right
To that most glorious house, that glistreth bright
With burning starres and everliving fire,
Whereof the keies are to thy hand behight
By wise Fidelia? Shee doth thee require,
To shew it to this knight, according his desire.'

LI

'Thrise happy man,' said then the father grave,
'Whose staggering steps thy steady hand doth lead,
And shewes the way, his sinfull soule to save!
Who better can the way to heaven aread
Then thou thy selfe, that was both borne and bred
In hevenly throne, where thousand angels shine?
Thou doest the praiers of the righteous sead
Present before the Majesty Divine,
And His avenging wrath to clemency incline.

LII

'Yet, since thou bidst, thy pleasure shalbe donne.
Then come, thou man of earth, and see the way,
That never yet was seene of Faries sonne,
That never leads the traveiler astray,
But, after labors long and sad delay,
Brings them to joyous rest and endlesse blis.
But first thou must a season fast and pray,
Till from her bands the spright assoiled is,
And have her strength recur'd from fraile infirmitis.'

LIII

That done, he leads him to the highest mount;
Such one, as that same mighty man of God,
That blood-red billowes like a walled front
On either side disparted with his rod,
Till that his army dry-foot through them yod,
Dwelt forty daies upon; where writt in stone
With bloody letters by the hand of God,
The bitter doome of death and balefull mone
He did receive, whiles flashing fire about him shone.

LIV

Or like that sacred hill, whose head full hie,
Adornd with fruitfull olives all arownd,
Is, as it were for endlesse memory
Of that deare Lord, who oft thereon was fownd,
For ever with a flowring girlond crownd:
Or like that pleasaunt mount, that is for ay
Through famous poets verse each where renownd,
On which the thrise three learned ladies play
Their hevenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay.

LV

From thence, far off he unto him did shew
A litle path, that was both steepe and long,
Which to a goodly citty led his vew;
Whose wals and towres were builded high and strong
Of perle and precious stone, that earthly tong
Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell;
Too high a ditty for my simple song:
The Citty of the Greate King hight it well,
Wherein eternall peace and happinesse doth dwell.

LVI

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see
The blessed angels to and fro descend
From highest heven, in gladsome companee,
And with great joy into that citty wend,
As commonly as frend does with his frend.
Whereat he wondred much, and gan enquere,
What stately building durst so high extend
Her lofty towres unto the starry sphere,
And what unknowen nation there empeopled were.

LVII

'Faire knight,' quoth he, 'Hierusalem that is,
The New Hierusalem, that God has built
For those to dwell in, that are chosen his,
His chosen people purg'd from sinful guilt,
With pretious blood, which cruelly was spilt
On cursed tree, of that unspotted Lam,
That for the sinnes of al the world was kilt:
Now are they saints all in that citty sam,
More dear unto their God, then younglings to their dam.'

LVIII

'Till now,' said then the knight, 'I weened well,
That great Cleopolis, where I have beene,
In which that fairest Fary Queene doth dwell,
The fairest citty was, that might be seene;
And that bright towre all built of christall clene,
Panthea, seemd the brightest thing that was:
But now by proofe all otherwise I weene;
For this great citty that does far surpas,
And this bright angels towre quite dims that towre of glas.'

LIX

'Most trew,' then said the holy aged man;
'Yet is Cleopolis, for earthly frame,
The fairest peece that eie beholden can:
And well beseemes all knights of noble name,

That covett in th' immortall booke of fame
To be eternized, that same to haunt,
And doen their service to that soveraigne dame,
That glory does to them for guerdon graunt:
For she is hevenly borne, and heaven may justly vaunt.

LX

'And thou, faire ymp, sprong out from English race,
How ever now accompted Elfins sonne,
Well worthy doest thy service for her grace,
To aide a virgin desolate foredonne.
But when thou famous victory hast wonne,
And high emongst all knights hast hong thy shield,
Thenceforth the suitt of earthly conquest shonne,
And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field.
For blood can nought but sin, and wars but sorrows yield.

LXI

'Then seek this path, that I to thee presage,
Which after all to heaven shall thee send;
Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage
To yonder same Hierusalem doe bend,
Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end:
For thou, emongst those saints whom thou doest see,
Shalt be a saint, and thine owne nations frend
And patrone: thou *Saint George* shalt called bee,
*Saint George* of mery *England*, the signe of victoree.'

LXII

'Unworthy wretch,' quoth he, 'of so great grace,
How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?'
'These, that have it attaynd, were in like cace,'
Quoth he, 'as wretched, and liv'd in like paine.'
'But deeds of armes must I at last be faine
And ladies love to leave, so dearely bought?'
'What need of armes, where peace doth ay remaine,'
Said he, 'and battailes none are to be fought?
As for loose loves, they' are vaine, and vanish into nought.'

LXIII

'O let me not,' quoth he, 'then turne againe
Backe to the world, whose joyes so fruitlesse are,
But let me heare for aie in peace remaine,
Or streight way on that last long voiage fare,
That nothing may my present hope empare.'
'That may not be,' said he, 'ne maist thou yitt
Forgoe that royal maides bequeathed care,
Who did her cause into thy hand committ,
Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quitt.'

LXIV

'Then shall I soone,' quoth he, 'so God me grace,
Abett that virgins cause disconsolate,
And shortly back returne unto this place,
To walke this way in pilgrims poore estate.
But now aread, old father, why of late
Didst thou behight me borne of English blood,
Whom all a Faeries sonne doen nominate?'
'That word shall I,' said he, 'avouchen good,
Sith to thee is unknowne the cradle of thy brood.

LXV

'For well I wote, thou springst from ancient race
Of Saxon kinges, that have with mightie hand
And many bloody battailes fought in place
High reard their royall throne in Britane land,
And vanquisht them, unable to withstand:
From thence a Faery thee unweeting reft,
There as thou slepst in tender swadling band,
And her base Elfin brood there for thee left:
Such men do chaungelings call, so chaungd by Faeries theft.

LXVI

'Thence she thee brought into this Faery lond,
And in an heaped furrow did thee hyde;
Where thee a ploughman all unweeting fond,
As he his toylesome teme that way did guyde,

And brought thee up in ploughmans state to byde,
Whereof Georgos he thee gave to name;
Till prickt with courage, and thy forces pryde,
To Fary court thou cam'st to seeke for fame,
And prove thy puissaunt armes, as seemes thee best became.'

LXVII

'O holy sire,' quoth he, 'how shall I quight
The many favours I with thee have fownd,
That hast my name and nation redd aright,
And taught the way that does to heaven bownd?'
This saide, adowne he looked to the grownd,
To have returnd, but dazed were his eyne,
Through passing brightnes, which did quite confound
His feeble sence, and too exceeding shyne:
So darke are earthly thinges compard to things divine.

LXVIII

At last, whenas himselfe he gan to fynd,
To Una back he cast him to retyre;
Who him awaited still with pensive mynd.
Great thankes and goodly meed to that good syre
He thens departing gave, for his paynes hyre.
So came to Una, who him joyd to see,
And after litle rest, gan him desyre,
Of her adventure myndfull for to bee.
So leave they take of Cœlia and her daughters three.

## CANTO XI

The knight with that old Dragon fights
Two dayes incessantly:
The third, him overthrowes, and gayns
Most glorious victory.

I

High time now gan it wex for Una fayre
To thinke of those her captive parents deare,
And their forwasted kingdom to repayre:
Whereto whenas they now approched neare,
With hartie wordes her knight she gan to cheare,
And in her modest maner thus bespake:
'Deare knight, as deare as ever knight was deare,
That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake,
High heven behold the tedious toyle, ye for me take.

II

'Now are we come unto my native soyle,
And to the place, where all our perilles dwell;
Here hauntes that feend, and does his dayly spoyle;
Therefore henceforth bee at your keeping well,
And ever ready for your foeman fell.
The sparke of noble corage now awake,
And strive your excellent selfe to excell;
That shall ye evermore renowmed make
Above all knights on earth, that batteill undertake.'

III

And pointing forth, 'Lo! yonder is,' said she,
'The brasen towre, in which my parents deare
For dread of that huge feend emprisond be;
Whom I from far see on the walles appeare,
Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly cheare:
And on the top of all I do espye
The watchman wayting tydings glad to heare;
That, O my parents, might I happily
Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery!'

IV

With that they heard a roaring hideous sownd,
That all the ayre with terror filled wyde,
And seemd uneath to shake the stedfast ground.
Eftsoones that dreadfull dragon they espyde,
Where stretcht he lay upon the sunny side
Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill.
But all so soone as he from far descryde
Those glistring armes, that heven with light did fill,
He rousd himselfe full blyth, and hastned them untill.

V

Then badd the knight his lady yede aloof,
And to an hill her selfe withdraw asyde,
From whence she might behold that battailles proof,
And eke be safe from daunger far descryde:

She him obayd, and turnd a litle wyde.
Now, O thou sacred Muse, most learned dame,
Fayre ympe of Phœbus, and his aged bryde,
The nourse of time and everlasting fame,
That warlike handes ennoblest with immortall name;

VI

O gently come into my feeble brest,
Come gently, but not with that mightie rage,
Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest infest,
And hartes of great heroës doest enrage,
That nought their kindled corage may aswage:
Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to sownd,
The god of warre with his fiers equipage
Thou doest awake, sleepe never he so sownd,
And scared nations doest with horror sterne astownd.

VII

Fayre goddesse, lay that furious fitt asyde,
Till I of warres and bloody Mars doe sing,
And Bryton fieldes with Sarazin blood bedyde,
Twixt that great Faery Queene and Paynim King,
That with their horror heven and earth did ring,
A worke of labour long, and endlesse prayse:
But now a while lett downe that haughtie string,
And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.

VIII

By this the dreadfull beast drew nigh to hand,
Halfe flying and halfe footing in his haste,
That with his largenesse measured much land,
And made wide shadow under his huge waste;
As mountaine doth the valley overcaste.
Approching nigh, he reared high afore
His body monstrous, horrible, and vaste,
Which, to increase his wondrous greatnes more,
Was swoln with wrath, and poyson, and with bloody gore.

IX

And over, all with brasen scales was armd,
Like plated cote of steele, so couched neare,
That nought mote perce, ne might his corse bee harmd
With dint of swerd, nor push of pointed speare:
Which as an eagle, seeing pray appeare,
His aery plumes doth rouze, full rudely dight,
So shaked he, that horror was to heare:
For as the clashing of an armor bright,
Such noyse his rouzed scales did send unto the knight.

X

His flaggy winges, when forth he did display,
Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
And eke the pennes, that did his pineons bynd,
Were like mayne-yardes, with flying canvas lynd,
With which whenas him list the ayre to beat,
And there by force unwonted passage fynd,
The clowdes before him fledd for terror great,
And all the hevens stood still, amazed with his threat.

XI

His huge long tayle, wownd up in hundred foldes,
Does overspred his long bras-scaly back,
Whose wreathed boughtes when ever he unfoldes,
And thick entangled knots adown does slack,
Bespotted as with shieldes of red and blacke,
It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
And of three furlongs does but litle lacke;
And at the point two stinges in fixed arre,
Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steele exceeden farr.

XII

But stinges and sharpest steele did far exceed
The sharpnesse of his cruel rending clawes:
Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
What ever thing does touch his ravenous pawes,

Or what within his reach he ever drawes.
But his most hideous head my tongue to tell
Does tremble; for his deepe devouring jawes
Wyde gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,
Through which into his darke abysse all ravin fell.

XIII

And, that more wondrous was, in either jaw
Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged were,
In which yett trickling blood and gobbets raw
Of late devoured bodies did appeare,
That sight thereof bredd cold congealed feare:
Which to increase, and all atonce to kill,
A cloud of smoothering smoke and sulphure seare
Out of his stinking gorge forth steemed still,
That all the ayre about with smoke and stench did fill.

XIV

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shieldes,
Did burne with wrath, and sparkled living fyre;
As two broad beacons, sett in open fieldes,
Send forth their flames far of to every shyre,
And warning give, that enimies conspyre
With fire and sword the region to invade;
So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous yre:
But far within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lampes were sett, that made a dreadfull shade.

XV

So dreadfully he towardes him did pas,
Forelifting up a loft his speckled brest,
And often bounding on the brused gras,
As for great joyaunce of his newcome guest.
Eftsoones he gan advaunce his haughty crest,
As chauffed bore his bristles doth upreare,
And shoke his scales to battaile ready drest,
That made the Redcrosse Knight nigh quake for feare,
As bidding bold defyaunce to his foeman neare.

XVI

The knight gan fayrely couch his steady speare,
And fiersely ran at him with rigorous might:
The pointed steele, arriving rudely theare,
His harder hyde would nether perce nor bight,
But, glauncing by, foorth passed forward right:
Yet, sore amoved with so puissaunt push,
The wrathfull beast about him turned light,
And him so rudely, passing by, did brush
With his long tayle, that horse and man to ground did rush.

XVII

Both horse and man up lightly rose againe,
And fresh encounter towardes him addrest:
But th' ydle stroke yet backe recoyld in vaine,
And found no place his deadly point to rest.
Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious beast,
To be avenged of so great despight;
For never felt his imperceable brest
So wondrous force from hand of living wight;
Yet had he prov'd the powre of many a puissant knight.

XVIII

Then, with his waving wings displayed wyde,
Himselfe up high he lifted from the ground,
And with strong flight did forcibly divyde
The yielding ayre, which nigh too feeble found
Her flitting parts, and element unsound,
To beare so great a weight: he, cutting way
With his broad sayles, about him soared round;
At last, low stouping with unweldy sway,
Snatcht up both horse and man, to beare them quite away.

XIX

Long he them bore above the subject plaine,
So far as ewghen bow a shaft may send,

Till struggling strong did him at last constraine
To let them downe before his flightes end:
As hagard hauke, presuming to contend
With hardy fowle, above his hable might,
His wearie pounces all in vaine doth spend
To trusse the pray too heavy for his flight;
Which, comming down to ground, does free it selfe by fight.

XX

He so disseized of his gryping grosse,
The knight his thrillant speare againe assayd
In his bras-plated body to embosse,
And three mens strength unto the stroake he layd;
Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked, as affrayd,
And glauncing from his scaly necke, did glyde
Close under his left wing, then broad displayd.
The percing steele there wrought a wound full wyde,
That with the uncouth smart the monster lowdly cryde.

XXI

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore,
When wintry storme his wrathful wreck does threat;
The rolling billowes beat the ragged shore,
As they the earth would shoulder from her seat,
And greedy gulfe does gape, as he would eat
His neighbour element in his revenge:
Then gin the blustring brethren boldly threat,
To move the world from off his stedfast henge,
And boystrous battaile make, each other to avenge.

XXII

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh,
Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the wood,
And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed fresh
A gushing river of blacke gory blood,
That drowned all the land, whereon he stood:
The streame thereof would drive a water-mill.
Trebly augmented was his furious mood
With bitter sence of his deepe rooted ill,
That flames of fire he threw forth from his large nosethril.

XXIII

His hideous tayle then hurled he about,
And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thyes
Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout
Striving to loose the knott, that fast him tyes,
Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash implyes,
That to the ground he is perforce constraynd
To throw his ryder: who can quickly ryse
From of the earth, with durty blood distaynd,
For that reprochfull fall right fowly he disdaynd.

XXIV

And fercely tooke his trenchand blade in hand,
With which he stroke so furious and so fell,
That nothing seemd the puissaunce could withstand:
Upon his crest the hardned yron fell;
But his more hardned crest was armd so well,
That deeper dint therein it would not make;
Yet so extremely did the buffe him quell,
That from thenceforth he shund the like to take,
But, when he saw them come, he did them still forsake.

XXV

The knight was wroth to see his stroke beguyld,
And smot againe with more outrageous might;
But backe againe the sparcling steele recoyld,
And left not any marke where it did light,
As if in adamant rocke it had beene pight.
The beast, impatient of his smarting wound,
And of so fierce and forcible despight,
Thought with his winges to stye above the ground;
But his late wounded wing unserviceable found.

XXVI

Then, full of griefe and anguish vehement,
He lowdly brayd, that like was never heard,
And from his wide devouring oven sent
A flake of fire, that, flashing in his beard,
Him all amazd, and almost made afeard:
The scorching flame sore swinged all his face,
And through his armour all his body seard,
That he could not endure so cruell cace,
But thought his armes to leave, and helmet to unlace.

XXVII

Not that great champion of the antique world,
Whom famous poetes verse so much doth vaunt,
And hath for twelve huge labours high extold,
So many furies and sharpe fits did haunt,
When him the poysoned garment did enchaunt,
With Centaures blood and bloody verses charmd,
As did this knight twelve thousand dolours daunt,
Whom fyrie steele now burnt, that erst him armd,
That erst him goodly armd, now most of all him harmd.

XXVIII

Faynt, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieved, brent
With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart, and inward fire,
That never man such mischiefes did torment;
Death better were, death did he oft desire,
But death will never come, when needes require.
Whom so dismayd when that his foe beheld,
He cast to suffer him no more respire,
But gan his sturdy sterne about to weld,
And him so strongly stroke, that to the ground him feld.

XXIX

It fortuned (as fayre it then befell,)
Behynd his backe, unweeting, where he stood,
Of auncient time there was a springing well,
From which fast trickled forth a silver flood,
Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good.
Whylome, before that cursed dragon got
That happy land, and all with innocent blood
Defyld those sacred waves, it rightly hot
The Well of Life, ne yet his vertues had forgot.

XXX

For unto life the dead it could restore,
And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away;
Those that with sicknesse were infected sore
It could recure, and aged long decay
Renew, as one were borne that very day.
Both Silo this, and Jordan, did excell,
And th' English Bath, and eke the German Spau,
Ne can Cephise, nor Hebrus match this well:
Into the same the knight back overthrowen fell.

XXXI

Now gan the golden Phœbus for to steepe
His fierie face in billowes of the west,
And his faint steedes watred in ocean deepe,
Whiles from their journall labours they did rest,
When that infernall monster, having kest
His wearie foe into that living well,
Can high advaunce his broad discoloured brest
Above his wonted pitch, with countenance fell,
And clapt his yron wings, as victor he did dwell.

XXXII

Which when his pensive lady saw from farre,
Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay,
As weening that the sad end of the warre,
And gan to highest God entirely pray,
That feared chaunce from her to turne away:
With folded hands, and knees full lowly bent,
All night shee watcht, ne once adowne would lay
Her dainty limbs in her sad dreriment,
But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

XXXIII

The morrow next gan earely to appeare,
That Titan rose to runne his daily race;
But earely, ere the morrow next gan reare
Out of the sea faire Titans deawy face,
Up rose the gentle virgin from her place,
And looked all about, if she might spy
Her loved knight to move his manly pace:
For she had great doubt of his safety,
Since late she saw him fall before his enimy.

XXXIV

At last she saw, where he upstarted brave
Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay:
As eagle fresh out of the ocean wave,
Where he hath lefte his plumes all hory gray,
And deckt himselfe with fethers youthly gay,
Like eyas hauke up mounts unto the skies,
His newly budded pineons to assay,
And merveiles at him selfe, stil as he flies:
So new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise.

XXXV

Whom when the damned feend so fresh did spy,
No wonder if he wondred at the sight,
And doubted, whether his late enimy
It were, or other new supplied knight.
He, now to prove his late renewed might,
High brandishing his bright deaw-burning blade,
Upon his crested scalp so sore did smite,
That to the scull a yawning wound it made:
The deadly dint his dulled sences all dismaid.

XXXVI

I wote not whether the revenging steele
Were hardned with that holy water dew,
Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele,
Or his baptized hands now greater grew,
Or other secret vertue did ensew;
Els never could the force of fleshly arme,
Ne molten mettall, in his blood embrew:
For till that stownd could never wight him harme,
By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charme.

XXXVII

The cruell wound enraged him so sore,
That loud he yelled for exceeding paine;
As hundred ramping lions seemd to rore,
Whom ravenous hunger did thereto constraine:
Then gan he tosse aloft his stretched traine,
And therewith scourge the buxome aire so sore,
That to his force to yielden it was faine;
Ne ought his sturdy strokes might stand afore,
That high trees overthrew, and rocks in peeces tore.

XXXVIII

The same advauncing high above his head,
With sharpe intended sting so rude him smott,
That to the earth him drove, as stricken dead,
Ne living wight would have him life behott:
The mortall sting his angry needle shott
Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder seasd,
Where fast it stucke, ne would thereout be gott:
The griefe thereof him wondrous sore diseasd,
Ne might his rancling paine with patience be appeasd.

XXXIX

But yet more mindfull of his honour deare
Then of the grievous smart, which him did wring,
From loathed soile he can him lightly reare,
And strove to loose the far in fixed sting:
Which when in vaine he tryde with struggeling,
Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he hefte,
And strooke so strongly, that the knotty string
Of his huge taile he quite a sonder clefte;
Five joints thereof he hewd, and but the stump him lefte.

XL

Hart cannot thinke, what outrage and what cries,
With fowle enfouldred smoake and flashing fire,
The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the skies,
That all was covered with darknesse dire:
Then fraught with rancour, and engorged yre,

He cast at once him to avenge for all,
And gathering up himselfe out of the mire
With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall
Upon his sunne-bright shield, and grypt it fast withall.

XLI

Much was the man encombred with his hold,
In feare to lose his weapon in his paw,
Ne wist yett how his talaunts to unfold;
For harder was from Cerberus greedy jaw
To plucke a bone, then from his cruell claw
To reave by strength the griped gage away:
Thrise he assayd it from his foote to draw,
And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay;
It booted nought to thinke to robbe him of his pray.

XLII

Tho, when he saw no power might prevaile,
His trusty sword he cald to his last aid,
Wherewith he fiersly did his foe assaile,
And double blowes about him stoutly laid,
That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid,
As sparckles from the andvile use to fly,
When heavy hammers on the wedg are swaid;
Therewith at last he forst him to unty
One of his grasping feete, him to defend thereby.

XLIII

The other foote, fast fixed on his shield,
Whenas no strength nor stroks mote him constraine
To loose, ne yet the warlike pledg to yield,
He smott thereat with all his might and maine,
That nought so wondrous puissaunce might sustaine:
Upon the joint the lucky steele did light,
And made such way, that hewd it quite in twaine:
The paw yett missed not his minisht might,
But hong still on the shield, as it at first was pight.

XLIV

For griefe thereof, and divelish despight,
From his infernall fournace forth he threw
Huge flames, that dimmed all the hevens light,
Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone blew;
As burning Aetna from his boyling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces broke,
And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new,
Enwrapt in coleblacke clowds and filthy smoke,
That al the land with stench, and heven with horror choke.

XLV

The heate whereof, and harmefull pestilence,
So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire
A litle backeward for his best defence,
To save his body from the scorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrailes did expire.
It chaunst (Eternall God that chaunce did guide)
As he recoiled backeward, in the mire
His nigh foreweried feeble feet did slide,
And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore terrifide.

XLVI

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosy redd,
As they in pure vermilion had beene dide,
Whereof great vertues over all were redd:
For happy life to all which thereon fedd,
And life eke everlasting did befall:
Great God it planted in that blessed stedd
With his Almighty hand, and did it call
The Tree of Life, the crime of our first fathers fall.

XLVII

In all the world like was not to be fownd,
Save in that soile, where all good things did grow,
And freely sprong out of the fruitfull grownd,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dredd dragon all did overthrow.
Another like faire tree eke grew thereby,
Whereof who so did eat, eftsoones did know
Both good and ill: O mournfull memory!
That tree through one mans fault hath doen us all to dy.

XLVIII

From that first tree forth flowd, as from a well,
A trickling streame of balme, most soveraine

And dainty deare, which on the ground still fell,
And overflowed all the fertile plaine,
As it had deawed bene with timely raine:
Life and long health that gracious ointment gave,
And deadly wounds could heale, and reare againe
The sencelesse corse appointed for the grave.
Into that same he fell: which did from death him save.

XLIX

For nigh thereto the ever damned beast
Durst not approch, for he was deadly made,
And al that life preserved did detest:
Yet he it oft adventur'd to invade.
By this the drouping day-light gan to fade,
And yield his rowme to sad succeeding night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth, and wayes of living wight,
And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright.

L

When gentle Una saw the second fall
Of her deare knight, who, weary of long fight,
And faint through losse of blood, moov'd not at all,
But lay as in a dreame of deepe delight,
Besmeard with pretious balme, whose vertuous might
Did heale his woundes, and scorching heat alay,
Againe she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safetie gan devoutly pray,
And watch the noyous night, and wait for joyous day.

LI

The joyous day gan early to appeare,
And fayre Aurora from the deawy bed
Of aged Tithone gan her selfe to reare,
With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing red;
Her golden locks for hast were loosely shed
About her eares, when Una her did marke
Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred,
From heven high to chace the chearelesse darke;
With mery note her lowd salutes the mounting larke.

LII

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himselfe to battaile ready dight;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To have devourd, so soone as day he spyde,
When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
He woxe dismaid, and gan his fate to feare;
Nathlesse with wonted rage he him advaunced neare.

LIII

And in his first encounter, gaping wyde,
He thought attonce him to have swallowd quight,
And rusht upon him with outragious pryde;
Who him rencountring fierce, as hauke in flight,
Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright,
Taking advantage of his open jaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune might,
That deepe emperst his darksom hollow maw,
And, back retyrd, his life blood forth with all did draw.

LIV

So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath,
That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift;
So downe he fell, that th' earth him underneath
Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;
So downe he fell, as an huge rocky clift,
Whose false foundacion waves have washt away,
With dreadfull poyse is from the mayneland rift,
And, rolling downe, great Neptune doth dismay;
So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.

LV

The knight him selfe even trembled at his fall,
So huge and horrible a masse it seemd;

And his deare lady, that beheld it all,
Durst not approch for dread which she misdeemd;
But yet at last, whenas the direfull feend
She saw not stirre, of-shaking vaine affright,
She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end:
Then God she praysd, and thankt her faithfull knight,
That had atchievde so great a conquest by his might.

## CANTO XII

Fayre Una to the Redcrosse Knight
Betrouthed is with joy:
Though false Duessa, it to barre,
Her false sleightes doe imploy.

I

Behold! I see the haven nigh at hand,
To which I meane my wearie course to bend;
Vere the maine shete, and beare up with the land,
The which afore is fayrly tò be kend,
And seemeth safe from storms that may offend:
There this fayre virgin, wearie of her way,
Must landed bee, now at her journeyes end;
There eke my feeble barke a while may stay,
Till mery wynd and weather call her thence away.

II

Scarsely had Phœbus in the glooming east
Yett harnessed his fyrie-footed teeme,
Ne reard above the earth his flaming creast,
When the last deadly smoke aloft did steeme,
That signe of last outbreathed life did seeme
Unto the watchman on the castle wall;
Who thereby dead that balefull beast did deeme,
And to his lord and lady lowd gan call,
To tell, how he had seene the dragons fatall fall.

III

Uprose with hasty joy, and feeble speed,
That aged syre, the lord of all that land,
And looked forth, to weet if trew indeed
Those tydinges were, as he did understand:
Which whenas trew by tryall he out fond,
He badd to open wyde his brasen gate,
Which long time had beene shut, and out of hond
Proclaymed joy and peace through all his state;
For dead now was their foe, which them forrayed late.

IV

Then gan triumphant trompets sownd on hye,
That sent to heven the ecchoed report
Of their new joy, and happie victory
Gainst him, that had them long opprest with tort,
And fast imprisoned in sieged fort.
Then all the people, as in solemne feast,
To him assembled with one full consort,
Rejoycing at the fall of that great beast,
From whose eternall bondage now they were releast.

V

Forth came that auncient lord and aged queene,
Arayd in antique robes downe to the grownd,
And sad habiliments right well beseene:
A noble crew about them waited rownd
Of sage and sober peres, all gravely gownd;
Whom far before did march a goodly band
Of tall young men, all hable armes to sownd;
But now they laurell braunches bore in hand,
Glad signe of victory and peace in all their land.

VI

Unto that doughtie conquerour they came,
And him before themselves prostrating low,
Their lord and patrone loud did him proclame,
And at his feet their lawrell boughes did throw.
Soone after them, all dauncing on a row,
The comely virgins came, with girlands dight,
As fresh as flowres in medow greene doe grow,
When morning deaw upon their leaves doth light:
And in their handes sweet timbrels all upheld on hight.

VII

And them before, the fry of children yong
Their wanton sportes and childish mirth did play,
And to the maydens sownding tymbrels song,
In well attuned notes, a joyous lay,
And made delightfull musick all the way,
Untill they came where that faire virgin stood.
As fayre Diana, in fresh sommers day,
Beholdes her nymphes enraung'd in shady wood,
Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in christall flood;

VIII

So she beheld those maydens meriment
With chearefull vew; who, when to her they came,
Themselves to ground with gracious humblesse bent,
And her ador'd by honorable name,
Lifting to heven her everlasting fame:
Then on her head they sett a girlond greene,
And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt game;
Who, in her self-resemblance well beseene,
Did seeme, such as she was, a goodly maiden queene.

IX

And after all the raskall many ran,
Heaped together in rude rablement,
To see the face of that victorious man;
Whom all admired, as from heaven sent,
And gazd upon with gaping wonderment.
But when they came where that dead dragon lay,
Stretcht on the ground in monstrous large extent,
The sight with ydle feare did them dismay,
Ne durst approch him nigh, to touch, or once assay.

X

Some feard and fledd; some feard, and well it faynd;
One, that would wiser seeme then all the rest,
Warnd him not touch, for yet perhaps remaynd
Some lingring life within his hollow brest,
Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest
Of many dragonettes, his fruitfull seede;
Another saide, that in his eyes did rest
Yet sparckling fyre, and badd thereof take heed;
Another said, he saw him move his eyes indeed.

XI

One mother, whenas her foolehardy chyld
Did come to neare, and with his talants play,
Halfe dead through feare, her litle babe revyld,
And to her gossibs gan in counsell say:
'How can I tell, but that his talants may
Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender hand?'
So diversly them selves in vaine they fray;
Whiles some more bold, to measure him nigh stand,
To prove how many acres he did spred of land.

XII

Thus flocked all the folke him rownd about,
The whiles that hoarie king, with all his traine,
Being arrived where that champion stout
After his foes defeasaunce did remaine,
Him goodly greetes, and fayre does entertayne
With princely gifts of yvory and gold,
And thousand thankes him yeeldes for all his paine:
Then when his daughter deare he does behold,
Her dearely doth imbrace, and kisseth manifold.

XIII

And after to his pallace he them bringes,
With shaumes, and trompets, and with clarions sweet;
And all the way the joyous people singes,
And with their garments strowes the paved street;
Whence mounting up, they fynd purveyaunce meet
Of all that royall princes court became,
And all the floore was underneath their feet

Bespredd with costly scarlott of great name,
On which they lowly sitt, and fitting purpose frame.

XIV

What needes me tell their feast and goodly guize,
In which was nothing riotous nor vaine?
What needes of dainty dishes to devize,
Of comely services, or courtly trayne?
My narrow leaves cannot in them contayne
The large discourse of roiall princes state.
Yet was their manner then but bare and playne:
For th' antique world excesse and pryde did hate;
Such proud luxurious pompe is swollen up but late.

XV

Then, when with meates and drinkes of every kinde
Their fervent appetites they quenched had,
That auncient lord gan fit occasion finde,
Of straunge adventures, and of perils sad,
Which in his travell him befallen had,
For to demaund of his renowmed guest:
Who then with utt'rance grave, and count'nance sad,
From poynt to poynt, as is before exprest,
Discourst his voyage long, according his request.

XVI

Great pleasure, mixt with pittifull regard,
That godly king and queene did passionate,
Whyles they his pittifull adventures heard,
That oft they did lament his lucklesse state,
And often blame the too importune fate,
That heapd on him so many wrathfull wreakes;
For never gentle knight, as he of late,
So tossed was in Fortunes cruell freakes;
And all the while salt teares bedeawd the hearers cheaks.

XVII

Then sayd the royall pere in sober wise:
'Deare sonne, great beene the evils which ye bore
From first to last in your late enterprise,
That I note whether praise or pitty more:
For never living man, I weene, so sore
In sea of deadly daungers was distrest;
But since now safe ye seised have the shore,
And well arrived are, (High God be blest!)
Let us devize of ease and everlasting rest.'

XVIII

'Ah! dearest lord,' said then that doughty knight,
'Of ease or rest I may not yet devize;
For by the faith which I to armes have plight,
I bownden am streight after this emprize,
As that your daughter can ye well advize,
Backe to retourne to that great Faery Queene,
And her to serve sixe yeares in warlike wize,
Gainst that proud Paynim King that works her teene:
Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there have beene.'

XIX

'Unhappy falls that hard necessity,'
Quoth he, 'the troubler of my happy peace,
And vowed foe of my felicity;
Ne I against the same can justly preace:
But since that band ye cannot now release,
Nor doen undoe, (for vowes may not be vayne)
Soone as the terme of those six yeares shall cease,
Ye then shall hether backe retourne agayne,
The marriage to accomplish vowd betwixt you twayn.

XX

'Which, for my part, I covet to performe,
In sort as through the world I did proclame,
That who so kild that monster most deforme,
And him in hardy battayle overcame,
Should have mine onely daughter to his dame,
And of my kingdome heyre apparaunt bee:
Therefore since now to thee perteynes the same,
By dew desert of noble chevalree,
Both daughter and eke kingdome, lo! I yield to thee.'

XXI

Then forth he called that his daughter fayre,
The fairest Un', his onely daughter deare,

His onely daughter and his only hayre;
Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheare,
As bright as doth the morning starre appeare
Out of the east, with flaming lockes bedight,
To tell that dawning day is drawing neare,
And to the world does bring long wished light;
So faire and fresh that lady shewd her selfe in sight:

XXII

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in May;
For she had layd her mournefull stole aside,
And widow-like sad wimple throwne away,
Wherewith her heavenly beautie she did hide,
Whiles on her wearie journey she did ride;
And on her now a garment she did weare
All lilly white, withoutten spot or pride,
That seemd like silke and silver woven neare,
But neither silke nor silver therein did appeare.

XXIII

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties beame,
And glorious light of her sunshyny face,
To tell, were as to strive against the streame:
My ragged rimes are all too rude and bace,
Her heavenly lineaments for to enchace.
Ne wonder; for her own deare loved knight,
All were she daily with himselfe in place,
Did wonder much at her celestiall sight:
Oft had he seene her faire, but never so faire dight.

XXIV

So fairely dight, when she in presence came,
She to her syre made humble reverence,
And bowed low, that her right well became,
And added grace unto her excellence:
Who with great wisedome and grave eloquence
Thus gan to say — But eare he thus had sayd,
With flying speede, and seeming great pretence,
Came running in, much like a man dismayd,
A messenger with letters, which his message sayd.

XXV

All in the open hall amazed stood
At suddeinnesse of that unwary sight,
And wondred at his breathlesse hasty mood.
But he for nought would stay his passage right,
Till fast before the king he did alight;
Where falling flat, great humblesse he did make,
And kist the ground whereon his foot was pight;
Then to his handes that writt he did betake,
Which he disclosing, read thus, as the paper spake:

XXVI

'To thee, most mighty king of Eden fayre,
Her greeting sends in these sad lines addrest
The wofull daughter and forsaken heyre
Of that great Emperour of all the West;
And bids thee be advized for the best,
Ere thou thy daughter linck in holy band
Of wedlocke to that new unknowen guest:
For he already plighted his right hand
Unto another love, and to another land.

XXVII

'To me, sad mayd, or rather widow sad,
He was affyaunced long time before,
And sacred pledges he both gave, and had,
False erraunt knight, infamous, and forswore!
Witnesse the burning altars, which he swore,
And guilty heavens of his bold perjury,
Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,
Yet I to them for judgement just doe fly,
And them conjure t' avenge this shamefull injury.

XXVIII

'Therefore since mine he is, or free or bond,
Or false or trew, or living or else dead,
Withhold, O soverayne prince, your hasty hond
From knitting league with him, I you aread;
Ne weene my right with strength adowne to tread,
Through weakenesse of my widowhed or woe:
For Truth is strong, her rightfull cause to plead,

And shall finde friends, if need requireth soe.
So bids thee well to fare, thy neither friend nor foe, FIDESSA.'

XXIX

When he these bitter byting wordes had red,
The tydings straunge did him abashed make,
That still he sate long time astonished,
As in great muse, ne word to creature spake.
At last his solemne silence thus he brake,
With doubtfull eyes fast fixed on his guest:
'Redoubted knight, that for myne only sake
Thy life and honor late adventurest,
Let nought be hid from me, that ought to be exprest.

XXX

'What meane these bloody vowes and idle threats,
Throwne out from womanish impatient mynd?
What hevens? what altars? what enraged heates,
Here heaped up with termes of love unkynd,
My conscience cleare with guilty bands would bynd?
High God be witnesse, that I guiltlesse ame!
But if your selfe, sir knight, ye faulty fynd,
Or wrapped be in loves of former dame,
With cryme doe not it cover, but disclose the same.'

XXXI

To whom the Redcrosse Knight this answere sent:
'My lord, my king, be nought hereat dismayd,
Till well ye wote by grave intendiment,
What woman, and wherefore, doth me upbrayd
With breach of love and loialty betrayd.
It was in my mishaps, as hitherward
I lately traveild, that unwares I strayd
Out of my way, through perils straunge and hard;
That day should faile me ere I had them all declard.

XXXII

'There did I find, or rather I was fownd
Of this false woman, that Fidessa hight;
Fidessa hight the falsest dame on grownd,
Most false Duessa, royall richly dight,
That easy was t' inveigle weaker sight:
Who by her wicked arts and wiely skill,
Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,
Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
And to my foe betrayd, when least I feared ill.'

XXXIII

Then stepped forth the goodly royall mayd,
And on the ground her selfe prostrating low,
With sober countenaunce thus to him sayd:
'O pardon me, my soveraine lord, to sheow
The secret treasons, which of late I know
To have bene wrought by that false sorceresse.
Shee, onely she, it is, that earst did throw
This gentle knight into so great distresse,
That death him did awaite in daily wretchednesse.

XXXIV

'And now it seemes, that she suborned hath
This crafty messenger with letters vaine,
To worke new woe and improvided scath,
By breaking of the band betwixt us twaine;
Wherein she used hath the practicke paine
Of this false footman, clokt with simplenesse,
Whome if ye please for to discover plaine,
Ye shall him Archimago find, I ghesse,
The falsest man alive; who tries, shall find no lesse.'

XXXV

The king was greatly moved at her speach,
And, all with suddein indignation fraight,
Bad on that messenger rude hands to reach.
Eftsoones the gard, which on his state did wait,
Attacht that faytor false, and bound him strait:
Who, seeming sorely chauffed at his band,
As chained beare, whom cruell dogs doe bait,
With ydle force did faine them to withstand,
And often semblaunce made to scape out of their hand.

XXXVI

But they him layd full low in dungeon deepe,
And bound him hand and foote with yron chains,
And with continual watch did warely keepe:
Who then would thinke, that by his subtile trains
He could escape fowle death or deadly pains?
Thus when that princes wrath was pacifide,
He gan renew the late forbidden bains,
And to the knight his daughter deare he tyde,
With sacred rites and vowes for ever to abyde.

XXXVII

His owne two hands the holy knotts did knitt,
That none but death for ever can divide;
His owne two hands, for such a turne most fitt,
The housling fire did kindle and provide,
And holy water thereon sprinckled wide;
At which the bushy teade a groome did light,
And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,
Where it should not be quenched day nor night,
For feare of evill fates, but burnen ever bright.

XXXVIII

Then gan they sprinckle all the posts with wine,
And made great feast to solemnize that day:
They all perfumde with frankincense divine,
And precious odours fetcht from far away,
That all the house did sweat with great aray:
And all the while sweete musicke did apply
Her curious skill, the warbling notes to play,
To drive away the dull melancholy;
The whiles one sung a song of love and jollity.

XXXIX

During the which there was an heavenly noise
Heard sownd through all the pallace pleasantly,
Like as it had bene many an angels voice
Singing before th' Eternall Majesty,
In their trinall triplicities on hye;
Yett wist no creature, whence that hevenly sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly,
Himselfe thereby refte of his sences meet,
And ravished with rare impression in his sprite.

XL

Great joy was made that day of young and old,
And solemne feast proclaymd throughout the land,
That their exceeding merth may not be told:
Suffice it heare by signes to understand
The usuall joyes at knitting of loves band.
Thrise happy man the knight himselfe did hold,
Possessed of his ladies hart and hand,
And ever, when his eie did her behold,
His heart did seeme to melt in pleasures manifold.

XLI

Her joyous presence and sweet company
In full content he there did long enjoy,
Ne wicked envy, ne vile gealosy,
His deare delights were hable to annoy:
Yet, swimming in that sea of blisfull joy,
He nought forgott, how he whilome had sworne,
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
Unto his Faery Queene backe to retourne:
The which he shortly did, and Una left to mourne.

XLII

Now strike your sailes, yee jolly mariners,
For we be come unto a quiet rode,
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this weary vessell of her lode.
Here she a while may make her safe abode,
Till she repaired have her tackles spent,
And wants supplide; and then againe abroad
On the long voiage whereto she is bent:
Well may she speede, and fairely finish her intent.

## EPITHALAMION

[Published 1595.]

Ye learned sisters, which have oftentimes
Beene to me ayding, others to adorne,
Whom ye thought worthy of your gracefull rymes,
That even the greatest did not greatly scorne
To heare theyr names sung in your simple layes,
But joyed in theyr praise;
And when ye list your owne mishaps to mourne,
Which death, or love, or fortunes wreck did rayse,
Your string could soone to sadder tenor turne,
And teach the woods and waters to lament
Your dolefull dreriment:
Now lay those sorrowfull complaints aside,
And having all your heads with girland crownd,
Helpe me mine owne loves prayses to resound;
Ne let the same of any be envide:
So Orpheus did for his owne bride:
So I unto my selfe alone will sing;
The woods shall to me answer, and my eccho ring.

Early, before the worlds light giving lampe
His golden beame upon the hils doth spred,
Having disperst the nights unchearefull dampe,
Doe ye awake, and, with fresh lustyhed,
Go to the bowre of my beloved love,
My truest turtle dove:
Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake,
And long since ready forth his maske to move,
With his bright tead that flames with many a flake,
And many a bachelor to waite on him,
In theyr fresh garments trim.
Bid her awake therefore, and soone her dight,
For lo! the wished day is come at last,
That shall, for al the paynes and sorrowes past,
Pay to her usury of long delight:
And whylest she doth her dight,
Doe ye to her of joy and solace sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.

Bring with you all the nymphes that you can heare,
Both of the rivers and the forrests greene,
And of the sea that neighbours to her neare,
Al with gay girlands goodly wel beseene.
And let them also with them bring in hand
Another gay girland,
For my fayre love, of lillyes and of roses,
Bound truelove wize with a blew silke riband.
And let them make great store of bridale poses,
And let them eeke bring store of other flowers,
To deck the bridale bowers.
And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread,
For feare the stones her tender foot should wrong,
Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,
And diapred lyke the discolored mead.
Which done, doe at her chamber dore awayt,
For she will waken strayt;
The whiles doe ye this song unto her sing,
The woods shall to you answer, and your eccho ring.

Ye nymphes of Mulla, which with carefull heed
The silver scaly trouts doe tend full well,
And greedy pikes which use therein to feed,
(Those trouts and pikes all others doo excell)
And ye likewise which keepe the rushy lake,
Where none doo fishes take,
Bynd up the locks the which hang scatterd light,
And in his waters, which your mirror make,
Behold your faces as the christall bright,
That when you come whereas my love doth lie,
No blemish she may spie.
And eke ye lightfoot mayds which keepe the dere
That on the hoary mountayne use to towre,
And the wylde wolves, which seeke them to devoure,
With your steele darts doo chace from comming neer,
Be also present heere,
To helpe to decke her, and to help to sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.

Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time:
The rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed,
All ready to her silver coche to clyme,
And Phœbus gins to shew his glorious hed.
Hark how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr laies,
And carroll of loves praise!
The merry larke hir mattins sings aloft,
The thrush replyes, the mavis descant playes,
The ouzell shrills, the ruddock warbles soft,
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this dayes merriment.
Ah! my deere love, why doe ye sleepe thus long,
When meeter were that ye should now awake,
T' awayt the comming of your joyous make,
And hearken to the birds love-learned song,
The deawy leaves among?
For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
That all the woods them answer, and theyr eccho ring.

My love is now awake out of her dreame,
And her fayre eyes, like stars that dimmed were
With darksome cloud, now shew theyr goodly beams
More bright then Hesperus his head doth rere.
Come now, ye damzels, daughters of delight,
Helpe quickly her to dight.
But first come ye, fayre Houres, which were begot,
In Joves sweet paradice, of Day and Night,
Which doe the seasons of the year allot,
And al that ever in this world is fayre
Do make and still repayre.
And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian Queene,
The which doe still adorne her beauties pride,
Helpe to addorne my beautifullest bride:
And as ye her array, still throw betweene
Some graces to be seene:
And as ye use to Venus, to her sing,
The whiles the woods shal answer, and your eccho ring.

Now is my love all ready forth to come:
Let all the virgins therefore well awayt,
And ye fresh boyes, that tend upon her groome,
Prepare your selves, for he is comming strayt.
Set all your things in seemely good aray,
Fit for so joyfull day,
The joyfulst day that ever sunne did see.
Faire Sun, shew forth thy favourable ray,
And let thy lifull heat not fervent be,
For feare of burning her sunshyny face,
Her beauty to disgrace.
O fayrest Phœbus, father of the Muse,
If ever I did honour thee aright,
Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,
Doe not thy servants simple boone refuse,
But let this day, let this one day be myne,
Let all the rest be thine.
Then I thy soverayne prayses loud wil sing,
That all the woods shal answer, and theyr eccho ring.

Harke how the minstrels gin to shrill aloud
Their merry musick that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling croud,
That well agree withouten breach or jar.
But most of all the damzels doe delite,
When they their tymbrels smyte,
And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,
That all the sences they doe ravish quite,
The whyles the boyes run up and downe the street,
Crying aloud with strong confused noyce,
As if it were one voyce.
'Hymen, Iō Hymen, Hymen,' they do shout,
That even to the heavens theyr shouting shrill
Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;
To which the people, standing all about,
As in approvance doe thereto applaud,
And loud advaunce her laud,
And evermore they 'Hymen, Hymen' sing,
That al the woods them answer, and theyr eccho ring.

Loe! where she comes along with portly pace,
Lyke Phœbe, from her chamber of the east,
Arysing forth to run her mighty race,
Clad all in white, that seemes a virgin best.
So well it her beseemes, that ye would weene
Some angell she had beene.
Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre,
Sprinckled with perle, and perling flowres atweene,
Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre,
And being crowned with a girland greene,
Seeme lyke some mayden queene.

Her modest eyes, abashed to behold
So many gazers as on her do stare,
Upon the lowly ground affixed are;
Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
But blush to heare her prayses sung so loud,
So farre from being proud.
Nathlesse doe ye still loud her prayses sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your
eccho ring.

Tell me, ye merchants daughters, did ye see
So fayre a creature in your towne before,
So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
Adornd with beautyes grace and vertues
store?
Her goodly eyes lyke saphyres shining
bright,
Her forehead yvory white,
Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath
rudded,
Her lips lyke cherryes charming men to
byte,
Her brest like to a bowle of creame un-
cruded,
Her paps lyke lyllies budded,
Her snowie necke lyke to a marble towre,
And all her body like a pallace fayre,
Ascending uppe, with many a stately stayre,
To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.
Why stand ye still, ye virgins, in amaze,
Upon her so to gaze,
Whiles ye forget your former lay to sing,
To which the woods did answer, and your
eccho ring?

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
The inward beauty of her lively spright,
Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high de-
gree,
Much more then would ye wonder at that
sight,
And stand astonisht lyke to those which
red
Medusaes mazeful hed.
There dwels sweet Love, and constant Chas-
tity,
Unspotted Fayth, and comely Womanhood,
Regard of Honour, and mild Modesty;
There Vertue raynes as queene in royal
throne,
And giveth lawes alone,
The which the base affections doe obay,
And yeeld theyr services unto her will;
Ne thought of thing uncomely ever may
Thereto approch to tempt her mind to ill.

Had ye once seene these her celestial threa-
sures,
And unrevealed pleasures,
Then would ye wonder, and her prayses sing,
That al the woods should answer, and your
echo ring.

Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,
For to receyve this saynt with honour dew,
That commeth in to you.
With trembling steps and humble reverence,
She commeth in before th' Almighties vew:
Of her, ye virgins, learne obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces.
Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endlesse matrimony make;
And let the roring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes,
The whiles with hollow throates
The choristers the joyous antheme sing,
That al the woods may answere, and their
eccho ring.

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
And the pure snow with goodly vermill
stayne,
Like crimsin dyde in grayne:
That even th' angels, which continually
About the sacred altare doe remaine,
Forget their service and about her fly,
Ofte peeping in her face, that seemes more
fayre,
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
Are governed with goodly modesty,
That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,
Which may let in a little thought unsownd.
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?
Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answere, and your
eccho ring.

Now al is done; bring home the bride againe,
Bring home the triumph of our victory,
Bring home with you the glory of her gaine,
With joyance bring her and with jollity.

Never had man more joyfull day then this,
Whom heaven would heape with blis.
Make feast therefore now all this live long day;
This day for ever to me holy is;
Poure out the wine without restraint or stay,
Poure not by cups, but by the belly full,
Poure out to all that wull,
And sprinkle all the postes and wals with wine,
That they may sweat, and drunken be withall.
Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronall,
And Hymen also crowne with wreathes of vine;
And let the Graces daunce unto the rest,
For they can doo it best:
The whiles the maydens doe theyr carroll sing,
To which the woods shal answer, and theyr eccho ring.

Ring ye the bels, ye yong men of the towne,
And leave your wonted labors for this day:
This day is holy; doe ye write it downe,
That ye for ever it remember may.
This day the sunne is in his chiefest hight,
With Barnaby the bright,
From whence declining daily by degrees,
He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,
When once the Crab behind his back he sees.
But for this time it ill ordained was,
To chose the longest day in all the yeare,
And shortest night, when longest fitter weare:
Yet never day so long, but late would passe.
Ring ye the bels, to make it weare away,
And bonefiers make all day,
And daunce about them, and about them sing:
That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.

Ah! when will this long weary day have end,
And lende me leave to come unto my love?
How slowly do the houres theyr numbers spend!
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move!
Hast thee, O fayrest planet, to thy home
Within the westerne fome:
Thy tyred steedes long since have need of rest.
Long though it be, at last I see it gloome,
And the bright evening star with golden creast
Appeare out of the east.

Fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of love,
That all the host of heaven in rankes doost lead,
And guydest lovers through the nightes dread,
How chearefully thou lookest from above,
And seemst to laugh atweene thy twinkling light,
As joying in the sight
Of these glad many, which for joy doe sing,
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring!

Now ceasse, ye damsels, your delights forepast;
Enough is it that all the day was youres:
Now day is doen, and night is nighing fast:
Now bring the bryde into the brydall boures.
The night is come, now soone her disaray,
And in her bed her lay;
Lay her in lillies and in violets,
And silken courteins over her display,
And odourd sheetes, and Arras coverlets.
Behold how goodly my faire love does ly,
In proud humility!
Like unto Maia, when as Jove her tooke,
In Tempe, lying on the flowry gras,
Twixt sleepe and wake, after she weary was
With bathing in the Acidalian brooke.
Now it is night, ye damsels may be gon,
And leave my love alone,
And leave likewise your former lay to sing:
The woods no more shal answere, nor your echo ring.

Now welcome, night! thou night so long expected,
That long daies labour doest at last defray,
And all my cares, which cruell Love collected,
Hast sumd in one, and cancelled for aye:
Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,
That no man may us see,
And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,
From feare of perrill and foule horror free.
Let no false treason seeke us to entrap,
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy
The safety of our joy:
But let the night be calme and quietsome,
Without tempestuous storms or sad afray:
Lyke as when Jove with fayre Alcmena lay,
When he begot the great Tirynthian groome:
Or lyke as when he with thy selfe did lie,
And begot Majesty.

And let the mayds and yongmen cease to sing:
Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr eccho ring.

Let no lamenting cryes, nor dolefull teares,
Be heard all night within, nor yet without:
Ne let false whispers, breeding hidden feares,
Breake gentle sleepe with misconceived dout.
Let no deluding dreames, nor dreadful sights,
Make sudden sad affrights;
Ne let house-fyres, nor lightnings helplesse harmes,
Ne let the Pouke, nor other evill sprights,
Ne let mischivous witches with theyr charmes,
Ne let hob goblins, names whose sense we see not,
Fray us with things that be not.
Let not the shriech oule, nor the storke be heard,
Nor the night raven that still deadly yels,
Nor damned ghosts cald up with mighty spels,
Nor griesly vultures make us once affeard:
Ne let th' unpleasant quyre of frogs still croking
Make us to wish theyr choking.
Let none of these theyr drery accents sing;
Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr eccho ring.

But let stil Silence trew night watches keepe,
That sacred Peace may in assurance rayne,
And tymely Sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe,
May poure his limbs forth on your pleasant playne,
The whiles an hundred little winged loves,
Like divers fethered doves,
Shall fly and flutter round about our bed,
And in the secret darke, that none reproves,
Their prety stealthes shall worke, and snares shal spread
To filch away sweet snatches of delight,
Conceald through covert night.
Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will:
For greedy Pleasure, carelesse of your toyes,
Thinks more upon her paradise of joyes,
Then what ye do, albe it good or ill.

All night therefore attend your merry play,
For it will soone be day:
Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing,
Ne will the woods now answer, nor your eccho ring.

Who is the same which at my window peepes?
Or whose is that faire face that shines so bright?
Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepes,
But walkes about high heaven al the night?
O fayrest goddesse, do thou not envy
My love with me to spy:
For thou likewise didst love, though now unthought,
And for a fleece of woll, which privily
The Latmian shephard once unto thee brought,
His pleasures with thee wrought.
Therefore to us be favorable now;
And sith of wemens labours thou hast charge,
And generation goodly dost enlarge,
Encline thy will t' effect our wishfull vow,
And the chast wombe informe with timely seed,
That may our comfort breed:
Till which we cease our hopefull hap to sing,
Ne let the woods us answere, nor our eccho ring.

And thou, great Juno, which with awful might
The lawes of wedlock still dost patronize,
And the religion of the faith first plight
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize,
And eeke for comfort often called art
Of women in their smart,
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,
And all thy blessings unto us impart.
And thou, glad Genius, in whose gentle hand
The bridale bowre and geniall bed remaine,
Without blemish or staine,
And the sweet pleasures of theyr loves delight
With secret ayde doest succour and supply,
Till they bring forth the fruitfull progeny,
Send us the timely fruit of this same night.
And thou, fayre Hebe, and thou, Hymen free,

Grant that it may so be.
Til which we cease your further prayse to sing,
Ne any woods shal answer, nor your eccho ring.

And ye high heavens, the temple of the gods,
In which a thousand torches flaming bright
Doe burne, that to us wretched earthly clods
In dreadful darknesse lend desired light,
And all ye powers which in the same remayne,
More then we men can fayne,
Poure out your blessing on us plentiously,
And happy influence upon us raine,
That we may raise a large posterity,
Which from the earth, which they may long possesse
With lasting happinesse,
Up to your haughty pallaces may mount,
And for the guerdon of theyr glorious merit,
May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,
Of blessed saints for to increase the count.
So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,
And cease till then our tymely joyes to sing:
The woods no more us answer, nor our eccho ring.

Song, made in lieu of many ornaments
With which my love should duly have bene dect,
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,
Ye would not stay your dew time to expect,
But promist both to recompens,
Be unto her a goodly ornament,
And for short time an endlesse moniment.

## PROTHALAMION

OR

A SPOUSALL VERSE MADE BY EDM. SPENSER

IN HONOUR OF THE DOUBLE MARIAGE OF THE TWO HONORABLE & VERTUOUS LADIES, THE LADIE ELIZABETH AND THE LADIE KATHERINE SOMERSET, DAUGHTERS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARLE OF WORCESTER AND ESPOUSED TO THE TWO WORTHIE GENTLEMEN MASTER HENRY GILFORD, AND MASTER WILLIAM PETER, ESQUYERS

[Publ. 1596.]

Calme was the day, and through the trembling ayre
Sweete breathing Zephyrus did softly play,
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titans beames, which then did glyster fayre:
When I, whom sullein care,
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay
In princes court, and expectation vayne
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,
Like empty shaddowes, did aflict my brayne,
Walkt forth to ease my payne
Along the shoare of silver streaming Themmes;
Whose rutty bancke, the which his river hemmes,
Was paynted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adornd with daintie gemmes,
Fit to decke maydens bowres,
And crowne their paramours,
Against the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

There, in a meadow, by the rivers side,
A flocke of nymphes I chaunced to espy,
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks all loose untyde,
As each had bene a bryde:
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs entrayled curiously,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket;
And with fine fingers cropt full feateously
The tender stalkes on hye.
Of every sort, which in that meadow grew,
They gathered some; the violet pallid blew,
The little dazie, that at evening closes,
The virgin lillie, and the primrose trew,
With store of vermeil roses,
To decke their bridegromes posies
Against the brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

With that I saw two swannes of goodly hewe
Come softly swimming downe along the lee;
Two fairer birds I yet did never see:
The snow which doth the top of Pindus strew
Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a swan would be
For love of Leda, whiter did appear:
Yet Leda was, they say, as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare:
So purely white they were,
That even the gentle streame, the which them bare,
Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes spare
To wet their silken feathers, least they might
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so fayre,
And marre their beauties bright,
That shone as heavens light,
Against their brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

Eftsoones the nymphes, which now had flowers their fill,
Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the christal flood;
Whom when they sawe, they stood amazed still,
Their wondring eyes to fill.
Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fayre,
Of fowles so lovely, that they sure did deeme
Them heavenly borne, or to be that same payre
Which through the skie draw Venus silver teeme;
For sure they did not seeme
To be begot of any earthly seede,
But rather angels or of angels breede:
Yet were they bred of Somers-heat, they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and weede
The earth did fresh aray;
So fresh they seem'd as day,
Even as their brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odours yeild,
All which upon those goodly birds they threw,
And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus waters they did seeme,
When downe along by pleasant Tempes shore,
Scattred with flowres, through Thessaly they streeme,
That they appeare, through lillies plenteous store,
Like a brydes chamber flore.
Two of those nymphes, meane while, two garlands bound
Of freshest flowres which in that mead they found,
The which presenting all in trim array,
Their snowie foreheads therewithall they crownd,
Whil'st one did sing this lay,
Prepar'd against that day,
Against their brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

'Ye gentle birdes, the worlds faire ornament,
And heavens glorie, whom this happie hower
Doth leade unto your lovers blissfull bower,
Joy may you have and gentle hearts content
Of your loves couplement:
And let faire Venus, that is Queene of Love,
With her heart-quelling sonne upon you smile,
Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to remove
All loves dislike, and friendships faultie guile
For ever to assoile.
Let endlesse peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessed plentie wait upon your bord;
And let your bed with pleasures chast abound,
That fruitfull issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joyes redound,

Upon your brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, run softlie, till I end my song.'

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong,
Which said, their bridale daye should not be long.
And gentle Eccho from the neighbour ground
Their accents did resound.
So forth those joyous birdes did passe along,
Adowne the lee, that to them murmurde low,
As he would speake, but that he lackt a tong,
Yeat did by signes his glad affection show,
Making his streame run slow.
And all the foule which in his flood did dwell
Gan flock about these twaine, that did excell
The rest so far as Cynthia doth shend
The lesser starres. So they, enranged well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend,
Against their wedding day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes, run softly, till I end my song.

At length they all to mery London came,
To mery London, my most kyndly nurse,
That to me gave this lifes first native sourse;
Though from another place I take my name,
An house of auncient fame.
There when they came, whereas those bricky towres,
The which on Themmes brode aged backe doe ryde,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer Knights to byde,
Till they decayd through pride:
Next whereunto there standes a stately place,
Where oft I gayned giftes and goodly grace
Of that great lord which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feeles my freendles case:
But ah! here fits not well
Olde woes, but joyes to tell,
Against the bridale daye, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,
Great Englands glory and the worlds wide wonder,
Whose dreadfull name late through all Spaine did thunder,
And Hercules two pillors standing neere
Did make to quake and feare.
Faire branch of honor, flower of chevalrie,
That fillest England with thy triumphes fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name
That promiseth the same:
That through thy prowesse and victorious armes
Thy country may be freed from forraine harmes;
And great Elisaes glorious name may ring
Through al the world, fil'd with thy wide alarmes,
Which some brave Muse may sing
To ages following,
Upon the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issuing,
Like radiant Hesper when his golden hayre
In th' ocean billowes he hath bathed fayre,
Descended to the rivers open vewing,
With a great traine ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to bee seene
Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature,
Beseeming well the bower of anie queene,
With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature:
That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in sight,
Which decke the bauldricke of the heavens bright.
They two, forth pacing to the rivers side,
Received those two faire brides, their loves delight,
Which, at th' appointed tyde,
Each one did make his bryde,
Against their brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## SONG

[From *The Merchant of Venice*]

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engend'red in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.
*All.* Ding, dong, bell.

## SONG

[From *As You Like It*]

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

## SONG

[From *As You Like It*]

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly.
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend rememb'red not.
Heigh-ho! sing, etc.

## SONG

[From *Twelfth Night*]

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear, your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'T is not hereafter.
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What 's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth 's a stuff will not endure.

## SONG

[From *Cymbeline*]

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus gins arise
His steeds to water at those springs
On chalic'd flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise,
Arise, arise.

## ARIEL'S SONG

[From *The Tempest*]

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands.
Curtsied when you have, and kiss'd
The wild waves whist,
Foot it featly here and there,
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear
*Burden* (*dispersedly*). Hark, hark!
Bow-wow.
The watch-dogs bark!
Bow-wow.
*Ari.* Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry, "Cock-a-diddle-dow."

## ARIEL'S SONG

[From *The Tempest*]

FULL fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
*Burden.* Ding-dong.
*Ari.* Hark! now I hear them,—ding-dong, bell.

## ARIEL'S SONG

[From *The Tempest*]

*Ari.* "WHERE the bee sucks, there suck I.
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

## SONNETS

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .
THESE . INSUING . SONNETS .
MR. W. H. ALL . HAPPINESSE .
AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .
PROMISED .
BY .
OUR . EVER-LIVING . POET .
WISHETH .
THE . WELL-WISHING .
ADVENTURER . IN .
SETTING .
FORTH .

T. T.

### 18

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

### 29

WHEN, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee; and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love rememb'red such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

### 30

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow;
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

64

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

65

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

66

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:

Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey'd,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd
In process of the seasons have I seen.
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure and no pace perceiv'd;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

106

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights;
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

# ROBERT HERRICK

## HESPERIDES

[Publ. 1648]

### THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK

I SING of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July-flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes;
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice and ambergris;
I sing of times trans-shifting, and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white;
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab, and of the Fairy King;
I write of hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of heaven, and hope to have it after all.

### DELIGHT IN DISORDER

A SWEET disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring lace which here and there
Enthralls the crimson stomacher:
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly:
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat:
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility:
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

### TO DIANEME

DEAR, though to part it be a hell,
Yet, Dianeme, now farewell:
Thy frown last night did bid me go,
But whither only grief does know.
I do beseech thee ere we part,
If merciful as fair thou art,
Or else desir'st that maids should tell
Thy pity by love's chronicle,
O Dianeme, rather kill
Me, than to make me languish still!
'Tis cruelty in thee to th' height
Thus, thus to wound, not kill outright;
Yet there's a way found, if you please,
By sudden death to give me ease;
And thus devis'd, do thou but this —
Bequeath to me one parting kiss,
So sup'rabundant joy shall be
The executioner of me.

### THE WOUNDED CUPID

CUPID, as he lay among
Roses, by a bee was stung;
Whereupon, in anger flying
To his mother, said thus, crying:
Help! oh help! your boy's a-dying.
And why, my pretty lad, said she?
Then, blubbering, replied he:
A winged snake has bitten me,
Which country people call a bee.
At which she smiled; then, with her hairs
And kisses drying up his tears:
Alas! said she, my wag, if this
Such a pernicious torment is,
Come tell me then, how great's the smart
Of those thou woundest with thy dart!

### TO DIANEME

SWEET, be not proud of those two eyes
Which, starlike, sparkle in their skies;
Nor be you proud that you can see
All hearts your captives, yours yet free;
Be you not proud of that rich hair
Which wantons with the love-sick air;
Whenas that ruby which you wear,
Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,

Will last to be a precious stone
When all your world of beauty's gone.

## CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

GET up, get up for shame, the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colours through the air:
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept and bow'd toward the east
Above an hour since: yet you not dress'd;
Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said
And sung their thankful hymns, 't is sin,
Nay, profanation to keep in,
Whereas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair:
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you:
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying:
Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park
Made green and trimm'd with trees: see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch: each porch, each door ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May:
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
Some have despatch'd their cakes and cream
Before that we have left to dream:
And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:
Many a green-gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even:
Many a glance too has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks pick'd, yet we're not a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And, as a vapour or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

## THE CAPTIV'D BEE, OR THE LITTLE FILCHER

As Julia once a-slumbering lay
It chanced a bee did fly that way,
After a dew or dew-like shower,
To tipple freely in a flower.
For some rich flower he took the lip
Of Julia, and began to sip;
But when he felt he sucked from thence
Honey, and in the quintessence,
He drank so much he scarce could stir,
So Julia took the pilferer.

And thus surprised, as filchers use,
He thus began himself t' excuse:
Sweet lady-flower, I never brought
Hither the least one thieving thought;
But, taking those rare lips of yours
For some fresh, fragrant, luscious flowers,
I thought I might there take a taste,
Where so much syrup ran at waste.
Besides, know this: I never sting
The flower that gives me nourishing;
But with a kiss, or thanks, do pay
For honey that I bear away.
This said, he laid his little scrip
Of honey 'fore her ladyship:
And told her, as some tears did fall,
That that he took, and that was all.
At which she smiled, and bade him go
And take his bag; but thus much know:
When next he came a-pilfering so,
He should from her full lips derive
Honey enough to fill his hive.

## TO CHERRY-BLOSSOMS

Ye may simper, blush and smile,
And perfume the air awhile;
But, sweet things, ye must be gone,
Fruit, ye know, is coming on;
Then, ah! then, where is your grace,
Whenas cherries come in place?

## TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may go marry:
For having lost but once your prime
You may for ever tarry.

## TO ANTHEA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant to be,
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
To honour thy decree:
Or bid it languish quite away,
And't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
While I have eyes to see:
And, having none, yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair
Under that cypress-tree:
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me:
And hast command of every part
To live and die for thee.

## TO MEADOWS

Ye have been fresh and green,
Ye have been fill'd with flowers,
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

You have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

Y'ave heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round:
Each virgin like a spring,
With honeysuckles crown'd.

But now we see none here
Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevell'd hair
Adorn'd this smoother mead.

Like unthrifts, having spent
Your stock and needy grown,
Y'are left here to lament
Your poor estates, alone.

## OBERON'S FEAST

*Shapcot! to thee the fairy state*
*I, with discretion, dedicate.*
*Because thou prizest things that are*
*Curious and unfamiliar.*
*Take first the feast; these dishes gone,*
*We'll see the Fairy Court anon.*

A LITTLE mushroom table spread,
After short prayers, they set on bread;
A moon-parch'd grain of purest wheat,
With some small glittering grit to eat
His choice bits with; then in a trice
They make a feast less great than nice.
But all this while his eye is serv'd,
We must not think his ear was sterv'd;
But that there was in place to stir
His spleen, the chirring grasshopper,
The merry cricket, puling fly,
The piping gnat for minstrelsy.
And now we must imagine, first,
The elves present, to quench his thirst,
A pure seed-pearl of infant dew
Brought and besweetened in a blue
And pregnant violet; which done,
His kitling eyes begin to run
Quite through the table, where he spies
The horns of papery butterflies:
Of which he eats, and tastes a little
Of that we call the cuckoo's spittle.
A little fuzz-ball pudding stands
By, yet not blessed by his hands;
That was too coarse: but then forthwith
He ventures boldly on the pith
Of sugar'd rush, and eats the sagg
And well-bestrutted bee's sweet bag:
Gladding his palate with some store
Of emmets' eggs; what would he more?
But beards of mice, a newt's stewed thigh,
A bloated earwig and a fly;
With the red-capp'd worm that's shut
Within the concave of a nut,
Brown as his tooth. A little moth
Late fatten'd in a piece of cloth:
With withered cherries, mandrakes' ears,
Moles' eyes; to these the slain stag's tears
The unctuous dewlaps of a snail,
The broke-heart of a nightingale
O'ercome in music; with a wine
Ne'er ravish'd from the flattering vine,
But gently press'd from the soft side
Of the most sweet and dainty bride,
Brought in a dainty daisy, which
He fully quaffs up to bewitch
His blood to height; this done, commended
Grace by his priest; *the feast is ended.*

## TO DAFFODILS

FAIR daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

## THE BRACELET TO JULIA

WHY I tie about thy wrist,
Julia, this my silken twist;
For what other reason is't,
But to show thee how, in part,
Thou my pretty captive art?
But thy bondslave is my heart;
'Tis but silk that bindeth thee,
Knap the thread and thou art free:
But 'tis otherwise with me;
I am bound, and fast bound, so
That from thee I cannot go;
If I could, I would not so.

## TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON

SHUT not so soon; the dull-ey'd night
Has not as yet begun

To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,
No shadows great appear;
Nor doth the early shepherd's star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye,
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

## TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past
But you may stay yet here a while,
To blush and gently smile;
And go at last.

What! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night?
'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave:
And after they have shown their pride
Like you a while, they glide
Into the grave.

## TO A BED OF TULIPS

Bright tulips, we do know
You had your coming hither,
And fading-time does show
That ye must quickly wither.

Your sisterhoods may stay,
And smile here for your hour;
But die ye must away,
Even as the meanest flower.

Come, virgins, then, and see
Your frailties, and bemoan ye;
For, lost like these, 'twill be
As time had never known ye.

## TO PHYLLIS, TO LOVE AND LIVE WITH HIM

Live, live with me, and thou shalt see
The pleasures I'll prepare for thee;
What sweets the country can afford
Shall bless thy bed and bless thy board.
The soft, sweet moss shall be thy bed
With crawling woodbine over-spread;
By which the silver-shedding streams
Shall gently melt thee into dreams.
Thy clothing, next, shall be a gown
Made of the fleece's purest down.
The tongues of kids shall be thy meat,
Their milk thy drink; and thou shalt eat
The paste of filberts for thy bread,
With cream of cowslips buttered;
Thy feasting-tables shall be hills
With daisies spread and daffodils,
Where thou shalt sit, and red-breast by,
For meat, shall give thee melody.
I'll give thee chains and carcanets
Of primroses and violets.
A bag and bottle thou shalt have,
That richly wrought, and this as brave;
So that as either shall express
The wearer's no mean shepherdess.
At shearing-times, and yearly wakes,
When Themilis his pastime makes,
There thou shalt be; and be the wit,
Nay, more, the feast, and grace of it.
On holidays, when virgins meet
To dance the heyes with nimble feet,
Thou shalt come forth, and then appear
The queen of roses for that year;
And having danced, 'bove all the best,
Carry the garland from the rest.
In wicker baskets maids shall bring
To thee, my dearest shepherling,
The blushing apple, bashful pear,
And shame-fac'd plum, all simp'ring there.
Walk in the groves, and thou shalt find
The name of Phyllis in the rind
Of every straight and smooth-skin tree;
Where kissing that, I'll twice kiss thee.
To thee a sheep-hook I will send,
Be-prank'd with ribands to this end;
This, this alluring hook might be
Less for to catch a sheep than me.
Thou shalt have possets, wassails fine,
Not made of ale, but spiced wine,
To make thy maids and self free mirth,
All sitting near the glitt'ring hearth.

Thou shalt have ribands, roses, rings,
Gloves, garters, stockings, shoes, and strings
Of winning colours, that shall move
Others to lust, but me to love.
These, nay, and more, thine own shall be
If thou wilt love, and live with me.

## ART ABOVE NATURE: TO JULIA

When I behold a forest spread
With silken trees upon thy head,
And when I see that other dress
Of flowers set in comeliness;
When I behold another grace
In the ascent of curious lace,
Which like a pinnacle doth show
The top, and the top-gallant too.
Then, when I see thy tresses bound
Into an oval, square, or round,
And knit in knots far more than I
Can tell by tongue, or true-love tie;
Next, when those lawny films I see
Play with a wild civility,
And all those airy silks to flow,
Alluring me, and tempting so:
I must confess mine eye and heart
Dotes less on Nature than on Art.

## THE NIGHT-PIECE: TO JULIA

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-th'-Wisp mislight thee,
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
But on, on thy way
Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber:
What though the moon does slumber?
The stars of the night
Will lend thee their light
Like tapers clear without number.

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me;
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet
My soul I'll pour into thee.

## UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free;
O how that glittering taketh me!

## TO HIS BOOK

Go thou forth, my book, though late:
Yet be timely fortunate.
It may chance good luck may send
Thee a kinsman, or a friend,
That may harbour thee, when I
With my fates neglected lie.
If thou know'st not where to dwell,
See, the fire's by: farewell.

# NOBLE NUMBERS

[Publ. with *Hesperides*, 1648]

## HIS LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope, but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill
Has, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing, but to kill;
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing bell doth toll,
And the furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath prayed,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decayed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm toss'd about,
Either with despair, or doubt;
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears, and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd,
When to Thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

## A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where Thou my chamber for to ward
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come, and freely get
Good words or meat;
Like as my parlour, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unclipt, unflead.
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
The pulse is Thine,
And all those other bits, that be
There placed by Thee;
The worts, the purslain, and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of Thy kindness Thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth;
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand,
That soils my land;
And giv'st me for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one.
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year,
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream for wine.
All these, and better Thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart;
Which, fired with incense, I resign,
As wholly Thine;
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

## THE DIRGE OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

SUNG BY THE VIRGINS

O thou, the wonder of all days!
O paragon, and pearl of praise!
O virgin-martyr, ever blest
Above the rest
Of all the maiden train! We come,
And bring fresh strewings to thy tomb.

Thus, thus, and thus we compass round
Thy harmless and unhaunted ground;
And as we sing thy dirge, we will
The daffodil
And other flowers lay upon
The altar of our love, thy stone.

Thou wonder of all maids, liest here,
Of daughters all the dearest dear;
The eye of virgins; nay, the queen
Of this smooth green,
And all sweet meads; from whence we get
The primrose and the violet.

Too soon, too dear did Jephthah buy,
By thy sad loss, our liberty:
His was the bond and cov'nant, yet
Thou paid'st the debt:
Lamented maid! he won the day,
But for the conquest thou didst pay.

Thy father brought with him along
The olive branch and victor's song:
He slew the Ammonites, we know,
But to thy woe;
And in the purchase of our peace,
The cure was worse than the disease.

For which obedient zeal of thine,
We offer here, before thy shrine,
Our sighs for storax, tears for wine;
And to make fine
And fresh thy hearse-cloth, we will, here,
Four times bestrew thee ev'ry year.

Receive, for this thy praise, our tears:
Receive this offering of our hairs:
Receive these crystal vials fill'd
With tears distill'd
From teeming eyes; to these we bring,
Each maid, her silver filleting,

To gild thy tomb; besides, these cauls,[1]
These laces, ribbons, and these falls,[2]
These veils, wherewith we use to hide
The bashful bride,
When we conduct her to her groom:
And all we lay upon thy tomb.

No more, no more, since thou art dead,
Shall we e'er bring coy brides to bed;
No more, at yearly festivals
We cowslip balls
Or chains of columbines shall make
For this or that occasion's sake.

[1] *Cauls*, nets for the hair.
[2] *Falls*, trimmings hanging loosely.

No, no; our maiden pleasures be
Wrapp'd in the winding-sheet with thee:
'Tis we are dead, though not i' th' grave:
Or, if we have
One seed of life left, 'tis to keep
A Lent for thee, to fast and weep.

Sleep in thy peace, thy bed of spice,
And make this place all paradise:
May sweets grow here: and smoke from hence
Fat frankincense:
Let balm and cassia send their scent
From out thy maiden-monument.

May no wolf howl, or screech-owl stir
A wing about thy sepulchre!
No boisterous winds, or storms, come hither
To starve or wither
Thy soft sweet earth! but, like a spring,
Love keep it ever flourishing.

May all shy maids, at wonted hours,
Come forth to strew thy tomb with flow'rs:
May virgins, when they come to mourn,
Male-incense burn
Upon thine altar! then return,
And leave thee sleeping in thy urn.

## TO KEEP A TRUE LENT

Is this a fast, to keep
The larder lean?
And clean
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragg'd to go,
Or show
A downcast look and sour?

No; 'tis a fast to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat,
And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
From old debate
And hate;
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent.

# JOHN MILTON

## ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

(1629)

I

This is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III

Say, heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the heaven, by the Sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV

See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet!
Oh! run; prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessèd feet;
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

### THE HYMN

I

It was the winter wild,
While the Heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

II

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

III

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace.
She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

IV

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hookèd chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

V

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began.
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

VI

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

VII

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need:
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

VIII

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they than
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

IX

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringèd noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

X

Nature, that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat the Airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

XI

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced Night arrayed;
The helmèd cherubim
And sworded seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's newborn Heir.

XII

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung
While the Creator great,
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

XIV

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

XV

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

XVI

But wisest Fate says No,
This must not yet be so;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

XVII

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:
The aged Earth, aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

XVIII

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The Old Dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX

The Oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the step of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

XX

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

XXI

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

XXII

Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered god of Palestine;
And moonèd Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine:
The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

XXIII

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

XXIV

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain, with timbreled anthems dark,
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshiped ark.

XXV

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

XXVI

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

XXVII

But see! the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable.

## L'ALLEGRO

(1633)

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic Wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;

Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as ye go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock with lively din
Scatters the rear of Darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the lantskip round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some Beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of hearbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocond rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holyday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab the junkets eat:
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lanthorn led,
Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubbar fend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of Ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful Poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout

Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

## IL PENSEROSO

### (1633)

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop Queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, Chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering Moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the Bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere

The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those Dæmons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebs, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what Love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar King did ride;
And if aught else great Bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and inchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from Day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antick pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full voiced Quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell,
Of every star that Heaven doth shew,
And every hearb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

## LYCIDAS

### (1637)

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once more,
Ye Myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier

Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour *my* destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old Bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream.
Av me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her inchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, Shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfet witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,

That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend Sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake: —
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Anow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful Herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim Wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale gessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;

Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the Shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still Morn went out with sandals grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

# SONNETS

## TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL

(1652)

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

## ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT

(1655)

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold

Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

## ON HIS BLINDNESS

(1655)

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

## TO CYRIACK SKINNER.

(1655)

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

# PARADISE LOST

1658–1665

## THE VERSE

The measure is English heroic verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin — rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause therefore some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings — a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.

## BOOK I

### THE ARGUMENT

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject — Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall — the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things; presenting Satan, with his Angels, now fallen into Hell — described here not in the Centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos. Here Satan, with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in Heaven — for that Angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the Deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the highth of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
Say first — for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell — say first what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rowling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdúrate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served onely to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named Beëlzebub. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began: —
"If thou beest he — but Oh how fallen! how changed
From him! — who, in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright — if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen: so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,

And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost — the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome.
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire — that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of Gods,
And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs', and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."
So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
And him thus answered soon his bold Compeer: —
"O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers
That led the imbattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate!
Too well I see and rue the dire event
That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if He our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be,
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?"
Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied: —
"Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure —
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend

From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
If not what resolution from despair."
Thus Satan, talking to his nearest Mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
On Man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and, rowled
In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights — if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next Mate;
Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.
"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for Heaven? — this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since He
Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: fardest from Him is best,
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor — one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:

Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our loss,
Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"
So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered: — "Leader of those armies bright
Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled!
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers — heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal — they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth!"
He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear — to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand —
He walked with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called
His legions — Angel Forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched imbower; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcases
And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrown,
Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded: — "Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the Flower of Heaven — once yours; now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rowling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf? —
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"
They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,

Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:
A multitude like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,
The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
Their great Commander — godlike Shapes, and Forms
Excelling human; princely Dignities;
And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones,
Though of their names in Heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the earth,
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of Him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities:
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the heathen world.
Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix
Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,
Their altars by His altar, gods adored
Among the nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed
Within His sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursèd things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront His light.
First, *Moloch*, horrid King, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
Next *Chemos*, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroar to Nebo and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Elealè to the Asphaltick Pool:
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,

To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth* — those male,
These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads, as low
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came *Astoreth*, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king whose heart, though large,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. *Thammuz* came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive Ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,
In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshipers:
*Dagon* his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed *Rimmon*, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gained a king —
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
A crew who, under names of old renown —
*Osiris*, *Isis*, *Orus*, and their train —
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox —
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
*Belial* came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest

Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage; and, when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might:
The rest were long to tell; though far renowned
The Ionian gods — of Javan's issue held
Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
Their boasted parents; — *Titan*, Heaven's first-born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger *Saturn*: he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So *Jove* usurping reigned. These, first in Crete
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.
All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears:
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
Shon like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich imblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host up-sent
A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders — such as raised
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force with fixèd thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now
Advanced in view they stand — a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief

Had to impose. He through the armèd files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views — their order due,
Their visages and stature as of Gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
Glories: for never, since created Man,
Met such imbodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes — though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread Commander. He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shon
Above them all the Archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain —
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt — yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: Attention held them mute.
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way: —
"O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty! — and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend,
Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
If counsels different, or danger shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state

Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed —
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provoked: our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, Who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heaven that He ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption — thither, or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Cælestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired;
For who can think submission? War, then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved."
He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest and fierce with graspèd arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.
There stood a hill not far, whose griesly top
Belched fire and rowling smoke; the rest entire
Shon with a glossy scurf — undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
A numerous brigad hastened: as when bands
Of pioners, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on —
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the Centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
Deserve the pretious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross.
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet —
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid

With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven:
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babilon
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories, to inshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Ægypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the archèd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring entered; and the work some praise,
And some the Architect. His hand was known
In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægæan isle. Thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent,
With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.
Meanwhile the wingèd Haralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandæmonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
Their state-affairs: so thick the aerie crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless — like that pygmean race
Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocond music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.

Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

## BOOK II

### THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan — to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several imployments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshon the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed: —
"Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven! —
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate! —
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,
Did first create your leader — next, free choice,
With what besides in council or in fight
Hath been achieved of merit — yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more! With this advantage, then,
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise may speak."
He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
Stood up — the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed

Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
He recked not, and these words thereafter spake:—
"My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend — sit lingering here,
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of His tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his Angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe!
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then;
The event is feared! Should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
To our destruction, if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
In this abhorrèd deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,
We should be quite abolished, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential — happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being! —
Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal Throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."
He ended frowning, and his look denounced
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane.
A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seemed
For dignity composed, and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low —
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began: —
"I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urged
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope

Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are filled
With armèd watch, that render all access
Impregnable: oft on the bordering Deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection to confound
Heaven's purest light, yet our great Enemy,
All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
And that must end us; that must be our cure —
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated Night,
Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? How he can
Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
Will He, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
Belike through impotence or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger whom his anger saves
To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'
Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst —
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What when we fled amain, pursued and strook
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames; or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were opened, and this firmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall
One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's highth
All these our motions vain sees and derides,
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we, then, live thus vile — the race of Heaven
Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust

That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
And ventrous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow — to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished; whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;
Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting — since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."
Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake: —
"Either to disinthrone the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter; for what place can be for us
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord Supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits
Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtained
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labour and indurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!
As He our darkness, cannot we His light
Imitate when we please? This desart soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;

Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heaven shew more?
Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."
He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy and long process' of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven.
Which when Beëlzebub perceived — than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat — with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shon,
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake: —
"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,
Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines — here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed
This place our dungeon — not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude. For He, be sure,
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determined us and foiled with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Voutsafed or sought; for what peace will be given
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But, to our power, hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven

Err not) — another World, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favoured more
Of Him who rules above; so was His will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
That shook Heaven's whole circumference confirmed.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
Or substance, how endued, and what their power
And where their weakness: how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps,
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset — either with Hell-fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt His joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In His disturbance; when his darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original, and faded bliss —
Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel — first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence,
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those Infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews: —
"Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient Seat — perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms,
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,
Secure, and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
In search of this new World? whom shall we find
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet
The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his aerie flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings
Over the vast Abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy Isle? What strength, what art, can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries and stations thick
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection: and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."
This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt. But all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonished. None among the choice and prime

Of those Heaven-warring champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake: —
"O Progeny of Heaven! Empyreal Thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to Light.
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape, into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranty, adorned
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more as he above the rest
High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch
Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,
Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,
And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone, and as a God
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.
Nor failed they to express how much they praised
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened lantskip snow or shower,
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars

Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait!
The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
In order came the grand Infernal Peers:
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed
Alone the Antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme,
And god-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim inclosed
With bright imblazonry, and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By harald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers
Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields;
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds; before each van
Prick forth the aerie knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar: —
As when Alcides, from Œchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense)
Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate —
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute —
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy! —
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks

Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams —
Abhorrèd Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rowls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets —
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
Periods of time, — thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt,
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventrous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death —
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.
Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves with level wing the Deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by æquinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat

On either side a formidable Shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast — a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape —
If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either — black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired —
Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,
Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),
And with disdainful look thus first began: —
"Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,
That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave asked of thee.
Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven."
To whom the Goblin, full of wrauth, replied: —
"Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's sons,
Conjured against the Highest — for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."
So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the artick sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,

With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian, — then stand front to front
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.
"O father, what intends thy hand," she cried,
"Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head? And know'st for whom?
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
Whate'er his wrauth, which He calls justice, bids —
His wrauth, which one day will destroy ye both!"
She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
Forbore: then these to her Satan returned: —
"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee
What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
Me father, and that fantasm call'st my son.
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee."
To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied: —
"Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul? — once deemed so fair
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid
At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse — thee chiefly, who, full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
Becam'st enamoured; and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
And fields were fought in Heaven: wherein remained
(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
Clear victory; to our part loss and rout
Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
Into this Deep; and in the general fall
I also: at which time this powerful Key
Into my hands was given, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transformed: but he my inbred enemy

Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*
I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems,
Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
And, in embraces forcible and foul
Engendering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st — hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me: for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth
Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved, and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,
Save He who reigns above, none can resist."

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth: —

"Dear daughter — since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of — know,
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly host
Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded Deep, and through the void immense
To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold
Should be — and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round — a place of bliss
In the pourlieues of Heaven; and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom air, imbalmed
With odours. There ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."

He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her Sire: —

"The key of this infernal Pit, by due
And by command of Heaven's all-powerful King,

I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.
But what owe I to His commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-born —
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamours compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, toward the gate rowling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge porcullis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers
Could once have moved; then in the key-hole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut
Excelled her power: the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a bannered host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;
So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary Deep — a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth, and highth,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for maistrie, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms: they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere
He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more imbroils the fray
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds —
Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona storms
With all her battering engines, bent to rase
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides

Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity. All unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops
Ten thousand fadom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed —
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land — nigh foundered, on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryfon through the wilderness
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance,
And Tumult, and Confusion, all imbroiled,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.
To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: —
"Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint
Wandering this darksome desart, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek,
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
Confine with Heaven; or, if some other place,
From your dominion won, the Ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound. Direct my course:
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!"
Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answered: — "I know thee, stranger, who thou art —
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted Deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend,
Encroached on still through our intestine broils
Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first, Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world
Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain

To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell!
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."
He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply,
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way; harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo passed
Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks,
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other Whirlpool steered.
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on. With difficulty and labour he;
But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,
Following his track (such was the will of Heaven)
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost Orb
Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.
But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her fardest verge, and Chaos to retire,
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din;
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native seat,
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accurst, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

## BOOK III

[Lines 1–55. THE INVOCATION TO LIGHT]

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproachèd light
Dwelt from eternity — dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal Stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,
Before the Heavens, thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising World of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless Infinite!
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian Pool, though long detained
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,
Through utter and through middle Darkness borne,
With other notes than to the Orphean lyre
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,
Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to re-ascend,

Though hard and rare. Thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowl in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equalled with me in fate,
(So were I equalled with them in renown!)
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:
Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

## BOOK IV

### THE ARGUMENT

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions — fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil; journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits, in the shape of a Cormorant, on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, to look about him. The Garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of under penalty of death, and thereon intends to found his temptation by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil Spirit had escaped the Deep, and passed at noon by his Sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the Mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest: their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping: there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O FOR that warning voice, which he who saw
The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
*Woe to the inhabitants on Earth!* that now,
While time was, our first parents had been warned
The coming of their secret Foe, and scaped,
Haply so scaped, his mortal snare! For now
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,
The tempter, ere the accuser, of mankind,
To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell.
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the birth
Now rowling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself. Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The hell within him; for within him Hell

He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue!
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad;
Sometimes towards Heaven and the full-blazing Sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower:
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began: —
"O thou that, with surpassing glory crowned,
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new World — at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads — to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name.
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King!
Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
How due? Yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice. Lifted up so high,
I 'sdained subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burthensome, still paying, still to owe;
Forgetful what from him I still received;
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged — what burden then?
Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition. Yet why not? Some other Power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part. But other Powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without to all temptations armed!
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,
To me alike it deals eternal woe.
Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrauth and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
O, then, at last relent! Is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
Under what torments inwardly I groan.
While they adore me on the throne of Hell,
With diadem and sceptre high advanced,
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery: such joy ambition finds!
But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace, my former state; how soon

Would highth recal high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void
(For never can true reconcilement grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep);
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission, bought with double smart.
This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging, peace.
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind, created, and for him this World!
So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear,
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As Man ere long, and this new World, shall know."
Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face,
Thrice changed with pale — ire, envy, and despair;
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
For Heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly shew,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge:
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel, once warned; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
He marked and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champain head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up-grew
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung;
Which to our general Sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed;
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath showered the earth: so lovely seemed
That lantskip. And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As, when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabean odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest, with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles;
So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend
Who came their bane, though with them better pleased
Than Asmodëus with the fishy fume

That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Ægypt, there fast bound.
Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow;
But further way found none; so thick entwined,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed
All path of man or beast that passed that way.
One gate there only was, and that looked east
On the other side. Which when the Arch-Felon saw,
Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt,
At one slight bound high overleaped all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold:
So since into his Church lewd hirelings climb.
Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a Cormorant; yet not true life
Thereby regained, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only used
For prospect what, well used, had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him, with new wonder, now he views,
To all delight of human sense exposed,
In narrow room Nature's whole wealth; yea, more! —
A Heaven on Earth: for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by him in the east
Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line
From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to life,
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by —
Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown
That mountain, as his garden-mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst updrawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears,
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell
How, from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks,
Rowling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed

Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place,
A happy rural seat of various view:
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable — Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only — and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringèd bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered — which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world — nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne, by Orontes and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle,
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;
Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara (though this by some supposed
True Paradise) under the Ethiop line
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
God-like erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,
And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shon,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure —
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,
Whence true authority in men: though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;
For contemplation he and valour formed,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
Her unadornèd golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils — which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received
Yielded, with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;
Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame
Of Nature's works, honour dishonourable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
With shews instead, mere shews of seeming pure,

And banished from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
Of God or Angel; for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's imbraces met —
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,
They sat them down; and, after no more toil
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell —
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His breaded train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass
Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hastening now with prone career
To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending scale
Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan, still in gaze as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad: —
"O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mould — Earth-born perhaps,
Not Spirits, yet to Heavenly Spirits bright
Little inferior — whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love; so lively shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.
Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe —
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy:
Happy, but for so happy ill secured
Long to continue, and this high seat, your Heaven,
Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
Henceforth. My dwelling, haply, may not please,
Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me, loath, to this revenge
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.
And, should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just —
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged
By conquering this new World — compels me now

To do what else, though damned, I should abhor."
So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn
By word or action marked. About them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close; then rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
Griped in each paw; when Adam, first of men,
To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,
Turned him all ear to hear new utterance flow: —
"Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all, needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample World,
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite;
That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
In all this happiness, who at this hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge — of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life;
So near grows Death to Life, whate'er Death is —
Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know'st
God hath pronounced it Death to taste that Tree:
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signs of power and rule
Conferred upon us, and dominion given
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, Air, and Sea. Then let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights;
But let us ever praise him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task,
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers;
Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."
To whom thus Eve replied: — "O thou for whom
And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head! what thou hast said is just and right.
For we to him, indeed, all praises owe,
And daily thanks — I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed,
Under a shade, on flowers, much wondering where
And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,
Pure as the expanse of Heaven. I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A Shape within the watery gleam appeared,
Bending to look on me. I started back,
It started back; but pleased I soon returned,
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What thou seest,

What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft imbraces — he
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
Mother of human race.' What could I do,
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
Till I espied thee, fair, indeed, and tall,
Under a platan; yet methought less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned;
Thou, following, cried'st aloud, 'Return, fair Eve;
Whom fliest thou? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear:
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half.' With that thy gentle hand
Seized mine: I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."
So spake our general mother, and, with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreproved,
And meek surrender, half-imbracing leaned
On our first father; half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid. He, in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles when he impregns the clouds
That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained: —
"Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two,
Imparadised in one another's arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines!
Yet let me not forget what I have gained
From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems;
One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,
Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?
Suspicious, reasonless! Why should their Lord
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?
Can it be death? And do they only stand
By ignorance? Is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith?
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with gods. Aspiring to be such,
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
Some wandering Spirit of Heaven, by fountain-side,
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
What further would be learned. Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed!"
So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his roam.
Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where Heaven
With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun
Slowly descended, and with right aspect'
Against the eastern gate of Paradise
Levelled his evening rays. It was a rock

Of alablaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from Earth, one entrance high;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,
Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night;
About him exercised heroic games
The unarmed youth of Heaven; but nigh at hand
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, and shews the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds. He thus began in haste: —
"Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
Charge and strict watch that to this happy place
No evil thing approach or enter in.
This day at highth of noon came to my sphere
A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly Man,
God's latest image. I described his way
Bent all on speed, and marked his aerie gait,
But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks
Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured.
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,
I fear, hath ventured from the Deep, to raise
New troubles; him thy care must be to find."
To whom the wingèd Warrior thus returned: —
"Uriel, no wonder if thy perfet sight,
Amid the Sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
See far and wide. In at this gate none pass
The vigilance here placed, but such as come
Well known from Heaven; and since meridian hour
No creature thence. If Spirit of other sort,
So minded, have o'erleaped these earthy bounds
On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
But, if within the circuit of these walks,
In whatsoever shape, he lurk of whom
Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."
So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
Bore him slope downward to the Sun, now fallen
Beneath the Azores; whether the Prime Orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither rowled
Diurnal, or this less volúbil Earth,
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.
Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale.
She all night long her amorous descant sung:
Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament
With living Saphirs; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw;
When Adam thus to Eve: — "Fair consort, the hour
Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
Mind us of like repose; since God hath set

Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,
Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines
Our eye-lids. Other creatures all day long
Rove idle, unimployed, and less need rest;
Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
While other animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
With first approach of light, we must be risen,
And at our pleasant labour, to reform
Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth.
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest."
To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned: —
"My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
Unargued I obey. So God ordains:
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
With thee conversing, I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change; all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the Sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertil Earth
After soft showers; and sweet the coming-on
Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon,
And these the gems of Heaven, her starry train:
But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising Sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glistering with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent Night,
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon,
Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.
But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"
To whom our general ancestor replied: —
"Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,
Those have their course to finish round the Earth
By morrow evening, and from land to land
In order, though to nations yet unborn,
Ministering light prepared, they set and rise;
Lest total Darkness should by night regain
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In nature and all things; which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
Of various influence foment and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
On Earth, made hereby apter to receive
Perfection from the Sun's more potent ray.
These, then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
Shine not in vain. Nor think, though men were none,
That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise.
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the Earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night. How often, from the steep

Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
Singing their great Creator! Oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number joined, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven."
Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed
On to their blissful bower. It was a place
Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed
All things to Man's delightful use. The roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and gessamin,
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; under foot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone
Of costliest emblem. Other creature here,
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none;
Such was their awe of Man. In shadier bower
More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espousèd Eve decked first her nuptial bed,
And heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,
What day the genial Angel to our Sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed with all their gifts; and, O! too like
In sad event, when, to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.
Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
Both turned, and under open sky adored
The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth, and Heaven,
Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent globe,
And starry Pole: — "Thou also madest the Night,
Maker Omnipotent; and thou the Day,
Which we, in our appointed work imployed,
Have finished, happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordained by thee; and this delicious place,
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."
This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure,
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and, eased the putting-off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid; nor turned, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused:
Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and Man?
Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else!
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to raunge; by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,

Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
Of harlots — loveless, joyless, unindeared,
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight bal,
Or serenate, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These, lulled by nightingales, imbracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Showered roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,
Blest pair! and, O! yet happiest, if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more!
Now had Night measured with her shadowy cone
Half-way up-hill this vast sublunar vault,
And from their ivory port the Cherubim
Forth issuing, at the accustomed hour, stood armed
To their night-watches in warlike parade;
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake: —
"Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch; these other wheel the north:
Our circuit meets full west." As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge: —
"Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed
Search through this Garden; leave unsearched no nook;
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.
This evening from the Sun's decline arrived
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?), escaped
The bars of Hell, on errand bad, no doubt:
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring."
So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct
In search of whom they sought. Him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise,
At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits ingendering pride.
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touched lightly; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,
Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun, some magazin to store
Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;
So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend.
Back stept those two fair Angels, half amazed
So sudden to behold the griesly King;
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon: —
"Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell
Com'st thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,
Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?"
"Know ye not, then," said Satan, filled with scorn,
"Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate

For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar!
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?"
To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn: —
"Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminished brightness, to be known
As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright and pure.
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul.
But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give account
To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm."
So spake the Cherub; and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely — saw, and pined
His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed
Undaunted. "If I must contend," said he,
"Best with the best — the sender, not the sent;
Or all at once: more glory will be won,
Or less be lost." "Thy fear," said Zephon bold,
"Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee wicked, and thence weak."
The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,
Chaumping his iron curb. To strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had quelled
His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron joined,
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud: —
"O friends, I hear the tread of nimble feet
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;
And with them comes a third, of regal port,
But faded splendour wan, who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell —
Not likely to part hence without contest'.
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours."
He scarce had ended, when those two approached,
And brief related whom they brought, where found,
How busied, in what form and posture couched.
To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake: —
"Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed
To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example, but have power and right
To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Imployed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?"
To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow: —
"Gabriel, thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise;
And such I held thee; but this question asked
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
Though thither doomed? Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt,
And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight; which in this place I sought:
To thee no reason, who know'st only good,

But evil hast not tried. And wilt object
His will who bound us? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance. Thus much what was asked:
The rest is true; they found me where they say;
But that implies not violence or harm."
Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel moved,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:—
"O loss of one in Heaven to judge of wise,
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell prescribed!
So wise he judges it to fly from pain
However, and to scape his punishment!
So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the wrauth,
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
Which taught thee yet no better that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.
But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee
Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled? or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief,
The first in flight from pain, hadst thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."
To which the Fiend thus answered, frowning stern:—
"Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid
The blasting volleyed thunder made all speed
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
But still thy words at random, as before,
Argue thy inexperience what behoves,
From hard assays and ill successes past,
A faithful leader — not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried.
I, therefore, I alone, first undertook
To wing the desolate Abyss, and spy
This new-created World, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers
To settle here on Earth, or in mid Air;
Though for possession put to try once more
What thou and thy gay legions dare against;
Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
And practised distances to cringe, not fight."
To whom the Warrior-Angel soon replied:—
"To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
Argues no leader, but a liar traced,
Satan; and couldst thou 'faithful' add? O name,
O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
Army of fiends, fit body to fit head!
Was this your discipline and faith ingaged,
Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to the acknowledged Power Supreme?
And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
Patron of liberty, who more than thou
Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
But mark what I areed thee now: Avaunt!
Fly thither whence thou fledd'st. If from this hour
Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
Back to the Infernal Pit I drag thee chained,
And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred."
So threatened he; but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage, replied:—
"Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains,
Proud limitary Cherub! but ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King

Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy Compeers,
Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved."
While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported spears, as thick as when a field
Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears which way the wind
Sways them; the careful ploughman doubting stands
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds
Might have ensued; nor only Paradise,
In this commotion, but the starry cope
Of Heaven perhaps, or all the Elements
At least, had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn
With violence of this conflict, had not soon
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen
Betwixt Astræa and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weighed,
The pendulous round Earth with balanced air
In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
Battles and realms. In these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight:
The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam;
Which Gabriel spying thus bespake the Fiend:—
"Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine,
Neither our own, but given; what folly then
To boast what arms can do! since thine no more
Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now
To trample thee as mire. For proof look up,
And read thy lot in yon celestial sign,
Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak
If thou resist." The Fiend looked up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled
Murmuring; and with him fled the shades of Night.

## BOOK VII

[Lines 1–39. INVOCATION TO URANIA]

Descend from Heaven, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!
The meaning, not the name, I call; for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering. With like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element;
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander and forlorn.

Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.
Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
Purples the East. Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian Bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores;
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.

## BOOK IX

[Lines 1–47]

No more of talk where God or Angel Guest
With Man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast, permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change
Those notes to tragic — foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt
And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,
That brought into this World a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argument
Not less but more heroic than the wrauth
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse,
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late,
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed, chief maistrie to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
In battles feigned (the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung), or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
Impreses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament; then marshalled feast
Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals:
The skill of artifice or office mean;
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem! Me, of these
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climat, or years, damp my intended wing
Depressed; and much they may if all be mine,
Not Hers who brings it nightly to my ear.

# JOHN DRYDEN

## MAC FLECKNOE

### OR, A SATIRE UPON THE TRUE-BLUE-PROTESTANT POET

### T. S.

### BY THE AUTHOR OF ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL

[Publ. 1682.]

[Thomas Shadwell, once Dryden's friend, now his enemy, and an ardent Whig, had published an answer to *The Medal*, entitled, *The Medal of John Bayes, a Satire against Folly and Knavery*, in which he assailed Dryden with foul and scurrilous abuse. Dryden's reply was the following poem, published, according to Malone (I, 1, 169), who probably had some authority for his statement, on October 4, 1682.]

All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long;
In prose and verse, was own'd, without dispute,
Thro' all the realms of *Nonsense*, absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase;
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the State;
And, pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried: "'Tis resolv'd; for nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Sh—— alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Sh—— alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,
But Sh—— never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike thro', and make a lucid interval;
But Sh——'s genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And, coarsely clad in Norwich drugget, came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung,
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-tim'd oars before the royal barge,
Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial charge;
And big with hymn, commander of a host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets toss'd.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharpen'd thumb from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar;
Echoes from Pissing Alley Sh—— call,
And Sh—— they resound from Aston Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast that floats along.
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St. André's feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not ev'n the feet of thy own *Psyche's* rhyme;

Tho' they in number as in sense excel:
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton forswore
The lute and sword, which he in triumph bore,
And vow'd he ne'er would act Villerius more."
Here stopp'd the good old sire, and wept for joy
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dulness he was made.
Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclin'd,)
An ancient fabric rais'd t' inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:
A watchtower once; but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys,
Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturb'd by watch, in silence sleep.
Near these a Nursery erects its head,
Where queens are form'd, and future heroes bred;
Where unfledg'd actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks their tender voices try,
And little Maximins the gods defy.
Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear;
But gentle Simkin just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanish'd minds:
Pure clinches the suburbian Muse affords,
And Panton waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously design'd his Sh——'s throne;
For ancient Dekker prophesied long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense;
To whom true dulness should some *Psyches* owe,
But worlds of *Misers* from his pen should flow;
*Humorists* and hypocrites it should produce,
Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.

Now Empress Fame had publish'd the renown
Of Sh——'s coronation thro' the town.
Rous'd by report of Fame, the nations meet,
From near Bunhill, and distant Watling Street.
No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,
But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay;
From dusty shops neglected authors come,
Martyrs of pies, and relics of the bum.
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay,
But loads of Sh —— almost chok'd the way.
Bilk'd stationers for yeomen stood prepar'd,
And Herringman was captain of the guard.
The hoary prince in majesty appear'd,
High on a throne of his own labors rear'd.
At his right hand our young Ascanius sate,
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the State
His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
And lambent dulness play'd around his face.
As Hannibal did to the altars come,
Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
So Sh—— swore, nor should his vow be vain,
That he till death true dulness would maintain;
And, in his father's right, and realm's defense,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The king himself the sacred unction made,
As king by office, and as priest by trade.
In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
He plac'd a mighty mug of potent ale;
*Love's Kingdom* to his right he did convey,
At once his scepter, and his rule of sway;
Whose righteous lore the prince had practic'd young,
And from whose loins recorded *Psyche* sprung.
His temples, last, with poppies were o'erspread,
That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head.
Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
So Romulus, 't is sung, by Tiber's brook,
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honors of his head,
And from his brows damps of oblivion shed

Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:
"Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbadoes on the western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne;
Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his pen!"
He paus'd, and all the people cried, "Amen."
Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let *Virtuosos* in five years be writ;
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage,
Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,
And in their folly shew the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defense,
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name.
But let no alien S—dl—y interpose,
To lard with wit thy hungry *Epsom* prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst cull,
Trust nature, do not labor to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and, in each line,
Sir Formal's oratory will be thine:
Sir Formal, tho' unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill.
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:
What share have we in nature, or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's vein,
Or swept the dust in *Psyche's* humble strain?
Where sold he bargains, 'whip-stitch, kiss my arse,'
Promis'd a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
As thou whole Eth'rege dost transfuse to thine?
But so transfus'd, as oil on water's flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humors to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way, to dulness, 't is inclin'd;
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain-belly make pretense
Of likeness; thine 's a tympany of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou 'rt but a kilderkin of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite.
In thy felonious heart tho' venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or, if thou wouldst thy diff'rent talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."
He said: but his last words were scarcely heard;
For Bruce and Longvil had a trap prepar'd,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

# RELIGIO LAICI

## OR, A LAYMAN'S FAITH

A POEM

[Publ. 1682.]

*Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri*

## THE PREFACE

A POEM with so bold a title, and a name prefix'd from which the handling of so serious a subject would not be expected, may reasonably oblige the author to say somewhat in defense both of himself and of his undertaking. In the first place, if it be objected to me that, being a layman, I ought not to have concern'd myself with speculations which belong to the profession of divinity, I could answer that perhaps laymen, with equal advantages of parts and knowledge, are not the most incompetent judges of sacred things; but, in the due sense of my own weakness and want of learning, I plead not this; I pretend not to make myself a judge of faith in others, but only to make a confession of my own; I lay no unhallowed hand upon the ark, but wait on it, with the reverence that becomes me, at a distance. In the next place I will ingenuously confess that the helps I have us'd in this small treatise were many of them taken from the works of our own reverend divines of the Church of England; so that the weapons with which I combat irreligion are already consecrated; tho' I suppose they may be taken down as lawfully as the sword of Goliath was by David, when they are to be employ'd for the common cause, against the enemies of piety. I intend not by this to intitle them to any of my errors, which yet, I hope, are only those of charity to mankind; and such as my *own* charity has caus'd me to commit, that of *others* may more easily excuse. Being naturally inclin'd to scepticism in philosophy, I have no reason to impose my opinions in a subject which is above it; but whatever they are, I submit them with all reverence to my Mother Church, accounting them no further mine, than as they are authoriz'd, or at least uncondemn'd by her. And, indeed, to secure myself on this side, I have us'd the necessary precaution of showing this paper before it was publish'd to a judicious and learned friend, a man indefatigably zealous in the service of the Church and State; and whose writings have highly deserv'd of both. He was pleas'd to approve the body of the discourse, and I hope he is more my friend than to do it out of complaisance. 'T is true, he had too good a taste to like it all; and amongst some other faults recommended to my second view what I have written, perhaps too boldly, on St. Athanasius, which he advis'd me wholly to omit. I am sensible enough that I had done more *prudently* to have follow'd his opinion; but then I could not have satisfied myself that I had done honestly not to have written what was my own. It has always been my *thought* that heathens who never did, nor without miracle could, hear of the name of Christ, were yet in a possibility of salvation. Neither will it enter easily into my belief that, before the coming of our Savior, the whole world, excepting only the Jewish nation, should lie under the inevitable necessity of everlasting punishment, for want of that revelation which was confin'd to so small a spot of ground as that of Palestine. Among the sons of Noah we read of one only who was accurst; and if a blessing in the ripeness of time was reserv'd for Japhet, (of whose progeny we are,) it seems unaccountable to me why so many generations of the same offspring, as preceded our Savior in the flesh, should be all involv'd in one common condemnation, and yet that their posterity should be intitled to the hopes of salvation; as if a bill of exclusion had pass'd only on the fathers, which debarr'd not the sons from their succession. Or that so many ages had been *deliver'd over* to hell, and so many *reserv'd* for heaven, and that the Devil had the first choice, and God the next. Truly I am apt to think that the reveal'd religion which was taught by Noah to all his sons might continue for some ages in the whole posterity. That afterwards it was included wholly in the family of Sem is manifest; but when the progenies of Cham and Japhet swarm'd into colonies, and those colonies were subdivided into many others, in process of time their descendants lost by little and little the primitive and purer rites of divine worship, retaining only the notion of one deity; to which succeeding generations added others; for men took their degrees in those ages from conquerors to gods. Revelation being thus eclips'd to almost all mankind, the light of nature, as the next in dignity, was substituted; and that is it which St. Paul concludes to be the rule of the heathens, and by which they are hereafter to be judg'd. If my supposition be true, then the consequence which I have assum'd in my poem may be also true; namely, that Deism, or the principles of natural worship, are only the faint remnants or dying flames of reveal'd religion in the posterity of Noah: and that our modern philosophers, nay, and some of our philosophizing divines, have too much exalted the faculties of our souls, when they have maintain'd that by their force mankind has been able to find out that there is one supreme agent or intellectual being which we call God; that praise and prayer are his due worship; and the rest of those deducements, which I am confident are the remote effects of revelation, and unattainable by our discourse; I mean as simply consider'd, and without the benefit of divine illumination. So that we have not lifted up ourselves to God by the weak pinions of our reason, but he has been pleas'd to descend to us; and what Socrates said of him, what Plato writ, and the rest of

the heathen philosophers of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah. That there is something above us, some principle of *motion*, our reason can apprehend, tho' it cannot discover what it is, by its own virtue. And indeed 't is very improbable that we, who by the strength of our faculties cannot enter into the knowledge of any *being*, not so much as of our *own*, should be able to find out by them that supreme nature, which we cannot otherwise define than by saying it is infinite; as if infinite were definable, or infinity a subject for our narrow understanding. They who would prove religion by reason do but weaken the cause which they endeavor to support: 't is to take away the pillars from our faith, and to prop it only with a twig; 'tis to design a tower like that of Babel, which, if it were possible (as it is not) to reach heaven, would come to nothing by the confusion of the workmen. For every man is building a several way; impotently conceited of his own model and his own materials: reason is always striving, and always at a loss; and of necessity it must so come to pass, while 't is exercis'd about that which is not its proper object. Let us be content at last to know God by his own methods; at least, so much of him as he is pleas'd to reveal to us in the sacred Scriptures; to apprehend them to be the word of God is all our reason has to do; for all beyond it is the work of faith, which is the seal of heaven impress'd upon our human understanding.

And now for what concerns the holy bishop Athanasius, the preface of whose creed seems inconsistent with my opinion; which is, that heathens may possibly be sav'd: in the first place I desire it may be consider'd that it is the preface only, not the creed itself, which (till I am better inform'd) is of too hard a digestion for my charity. 'T is not that I am ignorant how many several texts of Scripture seemingly support that cause; but neither am I ignorant how all those texts may receive a kinder and more mollified interpretation. Every man who is read in Church history knows *that* belief was drawn up after a long contestation with Arius concerning the divinity of our blessed Savior, and his being one substance with the Father; and that, thus compil'd, it was sent abroad among the Christian churches, as a kind of test, which whosoever took was look'd on as an orthodox believer. 'T is manifest from hence that the heathen part of the empire was not concern'd in it; for its business was not to distinguish betwixt pagans and Christians, but betwixt heretics and true believers. This, well consider'd, takes off the heavy weight of censure, which I would willingly avoid from so venerable a man; for if this proportion, 'whosoever will be sav'd,' be restrain'd only to those to whom it was intended, and for whom it was compos'd, I mean the Christians; then the anathema reaches not the heathens, who had never heard of Christ, and were nothing interess'd in that dispute. After all, I am far from blaming even that prefatory addition to the creed, and as far from caviling at the continuation of it in the liturgy of the Church, where, on the days appointed, 't is publicly read: for I suppose there is the same reason for it now, in opposition to the Socinians, as there was then against the Arians; the one being a heresy which seems to have been refin'd out of the other; and with how much more plausibility of reason it combats our religion, with so much more caution to be avoided; and therefore the prudence of our Church is to be commended, which has interpos'd her authority for the recommendation of this creed. Yet, to such as are grounded in the true belief, those explanatory creeds, the Nicene and this of Athanasius, might perhaps be spar'd; for what is supernatural will always be a mystery in spite of exposition, and, for my own part, the plain Apostles' Creed is most suitable to my weak understanding, as the simplest diet is the most easy of digestion.

I have dwelt longer on this subject than I intended, and longer than, perhaps, I ought; for having laid down, as my foundation, that the Scripture is a rule; that in all things needful to salvation it is clear, sufficient, and ordain'd by God Almighty for that purpose, I have left myself no right to interpret obscure places, such as concern the possibility of eternal happiness to heathens; because whatsoever is obscure is concluded not necessary to be known.

But, by asserting the Scripture to be the canon of our faith, I have unavoidably created to myself two sorts of enemies: the Papists indeed, more directly, because they have kept the Scripture from us, what they could; and have reserv'd to themselves a right of interpreting what they have deliver'd under the pretense of infallibility: and the Fanatics more collaterally, because they have assum'd what amounts to an infallibility in the private spirit; and have detorted those texts of Scripture which are not necessary to salvation, to the damnable uses of sedition, disturbance, and destruction of the civil government. To begin with the Papists, and to speak freely, I think them the less dangerous, at least in appearance, to our present State, for not only the penal laws are in force against them, and their number is contemptible; but also their peerage and commons are excluded from parliaments, and consequently those laws in no probability of being repeal'd. A general and uninterrupted plot of their clergy, ever since the Reformation, I suppose all Protestants believe. For 't is not reasonable to think but that so many of their orders, as were outed from their fat possessions, would endeavor a reëntrance against those whom they account heretics. As for the late design, Mr. Coleman's letters, for aught I know, are the best evidence; and what they discover, without wiredrawing their sense, or malicious glosses, all men of reason conclude credible. If there be anything more than this requir'd of me, I must believe it as well as I am able, in spite of the witnesses, and out of a decent conformity

to the votes of parliament; for I suppose the Fanatics will not allow the private spirit in this case. Here the infallibility is at least in one part of the government; and our understandings as well as our wills are represented. But to return to the Roman Catholics, how can we be secure from the practice of Jesuited Papists in that religion? For not two or three of that order, as some of them would impose upon us, but almost the whole body of them, are of opinion that their infallible master has a right over kings, not only in spirituals but temporals. Not to name Mariana, Bellarmine, Emanuel Sa, Molina, Santarel, Simancha, and at least twenty others of foreign countries; we can produce, of our own nation, Campian, and Doleman or Parsons, besides many are nam'd whom I have not read, who all of them attest this doctrine, that the Pope can depose and give away the right of any sovereign prince, *si vel paulum deflexerit*, if he shall never so little warp; but if he once comes to be excommunicated, then the bond of obedience is taken off from subjects; and they may and ought to drive him, like another Nebuchadnezzar, *ex hominum Christianorum dominatu*, from exercising dominion over Christians; and to this they are bound by virtue of divine precept, and by all the ties of conscience under no less penalty than damnation. If they answer me (as a learned priest has lately written) that this doctrine of the Jesuits is not *de fide;* and that consequently they are not oblig'd by it, they must pardon me if I think they have said nothing to the purpose; for 'tis a maxim in their Church, where points of faith are not decided, and that doctors are of contrary opinions, they may follow which part they please; but more safely the most receiv'd and most authoriz'd. And their champion Bellarmine has told the world, in his *Apology*, that the king of England is a vassal to the Pope, *ratione directi dominii*, and that he holds in villanage of his Roman landlord. Which is no new claim put in for England. Our chronicles are his authentic witnesses that King John was depos'd by the same plea, and Philip Augustus admitted tenant. And which makes the more for Bellarmine, the French king was again ejected when our king submitted to the Church, and the crown receiv'd under the sordid condition of a vassalage.

'T is not sufficient for the more moderate and well-meaning Papists (of which I doubt not there are many) to produce the evidences of their loyalty to the late king, and to declare their innocency in this Plot: I will grant their behavior in the first to have been as loyal and as brave as they desire; and will be willing to hold them excus'd as to the second, (I mean when it comes to my turn, and after my betters; for 't is a madness to be sober alone, while the nation continues drunk;) but that saying of their Father Cres. is still running in my head, that they may be dispens'd with in their obedience to an heretic prince, while the necessity of the times shall oblige them to it: for that (as another of them tells us) is only the effect of Christian prudence; but when once they shall get power to shake him off, an heretic is no lawful king, and consequently to rise against him is no rebellion. I should be glad, therefore, that they would follow the advice which was charitably given them by a reverend prelate of our Church; namely, that they would join in a public act of disowning and detesting those Jesuitic principles; and subscribe to all doctrines which deny the Pope's authority of deposing kings, and releasing subjects from their oath of allegiance: to which I should think they might easily be induc'd, if it be true that this present Pope has condemn'd the doctrine of king-killing, (a thesis of the Jesuits,) amongst others, *ex cathedra*, (as they call it,) or in open consistory.

Leaving them, therefore, in so fair a way (if they please themselves) of satisfying all reasonable men of their sincerity and good meaning to the government, I shall make bold to consider that other extreme of our religion, I mean the Fanatics, or Schismatics, of the English Church. Since the Bible has been translated into our tongue, they have us'd it so, as if their business was not to be sav'd but to be damn'd by its contents. If we consider only them, better had it been for the English nation that it had still remain'd in the original Greek and Hebrew, or at least in the honest Latin of St. Jerome, than that several texts in it should have been prevaricated to the destruction of that government which put it into so ungrateful hands.

How many heresies the first translation of Tyndal produc'd in few years, let my Lord Herbert's history of Henry the Eighth inform you; insomuch that for the gross errors in it, and the great mischiefs it occasion'd, a sentence pass'd on the first edition of the Bible, too shameful almost to be repeated. After the short reign of Edward the Sixth, (who had continued to carry on the Reformation on other principles than it was begun,) everyone knows that not only the chief promoters of that work, but many others whose consciences would not dispense with Popery, were forc'd, for fear of persecution, to change climates: from whence returning at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, many of them who had been in France, and at Geneva, brought back the rigid opinions and imperious discipline of Calvin, to graff upon our Reformation. Which, tho' they cunningly conceal'd at first, (as well knowing how nauseously that drug would go down in a lawful monarchy, which was prescrib'd for a rebellious commonwealth,) yet they always kept it in reserve; and were never wanting to themselves either in court or parliament, when either they had any prospect of a numerous party of Fanatic members in the one, or the encouragement of any favorite in the other, whose covetousness was gaping at the patrimony of the Church. They who will consult the works of our venerable Hooker, or the account of his life, or more particularly the letter written to him on this subject by George Cranmer, may

see by what gradations they proceeded: from the dislike of cap and surplice, the very next step was admonitions to the parliament against the whole government ecclesiastical; then came out volumes in English and Latin in defense of their tenets; and immediately practices were set on foot to erect their discipline without authority. Those not succeeding, satire and railing was the next; and Martin Mar-prelate (the Marvell of those times) was the first Presbyterian scribbler who sanctified libels and scurrility to the use of the Good Old Cause. Which was done (says my author) upon this account; that (their serious treatises having been fully answer'd and refuted) they might compass by railing what they had lost by reasoning; and, when their cause was sunk in court and parliament, they might at least hedge in a stake amongst the rabble: for to their ignorance all things are wit which are abusive. But if Church and State were made the theme, then the doctoral degree of wit was to be taken at Billingsgate: even the most saintlike of the party, tho' they durst not excuse this contempt and vilifying of the government, yet were pleas'd, and grinn'd at it with a pious smile, and call'd it a judgment of God against the hierarchy. Thus Sectaries, we may see, were born with teeth, foul-mouth'd and scurrilous from their infancy; and if spiritual pride, venom, violence, contempt of superiors, and slander, had been the marks of orthodox belief, the Presbytery and the rest of our Schismatics, which are their spawn, were always the most visible Church in the Christian world.

'T is true, the government was too strong at that time for a rebellion; but to shew what proficiency they had made in Calvin's school, even *then* their mouths water'd at it; for two of their gifted brotherhood, (Hacket and Coppinger,) as the story tells us, got up into a pease-cart and harangued the people, to dispose them to an insurrection, and to establish their discipline by force: so that, however it comes about that now they celebrate Queen Elizabeth's birthnight as that of their saint and patroness, yet then they were for doing the work of the Lord by arms against her; and, in all probability, they wanted but a Fanatic lord mayor and two sheriffs of their party, to have compass'd it.

Our venerable Hooker, after many admonitions which he had given them, toward the end of his preface breaks out into this prophetic speech: "There is in every one of these considerations most just cause to fear, lest our hastiness to embrace a thing of so perilous consequence" (meaning the Presbyterian discipline) "should cause posterity to feel those evils, which as yet are more easy for us to prevent, than they would be for them to remedy."

How fatally this Cassandra has foretold, we know too well by sad experience: the seeds were sown in the time of Queen Elizabeth, the bloody harvest ripen'd in the reign of King Charles the Martyr; and, because all the sheaves could not be carried off without shedding some of the loose grains, another crop is too like to follow; nay, I fear 't is unavoidable if the conventiclers be permitted still to scatter.

A man may be suffer'd to quote an adversary to our religion, when he speaks truth; and 't is the observation of Maimbourg, in his *History of Calvinism*, that wherever that discipline was planted and embrac'd, rebellion, civil war, and misery attended it. And how indeed should it happen otherwise? Reformation of Church and State has always been the ground of our divisions in England. While we were Papists, our Holy Father rid us, by pretending authority out of the Scriptures to depose princes; when we shook off his authority, the Sectaries furnish'd themselves with the same weapons; and out of the same magazine, the Bible: so that the Scriptures, which are in themselves the greatest security of governors, as commanding express obedience to them, are now turn'd to their destruction; and never since the Reformation has there wanted a text of their interpreting to authorize a rebel. And 't is to be noted by the way that the doctrines of king-killing and deposing, which have been taken up only by the worst party of the Papists, the most frontless flatterers of the Pope's authority, have been espous'd, defended, and are still maintain'd by the whole body of Nonconformists and Republicans. 'T is but dubbing themselves the people of God, which 't is the interest of their preachers to tell them they are, and their own interest to believe; and after that, they cannot dip into the Bible, but one text or another will turn up for their purpose; if they are under persecution, (as they call it,) then that is a mark of their election; if they flourish, then God works miracles for their deliverance, and the saints are to possess the earth.

They may think themselves to be too roughly handled in this paper; but I, who know best how far I could have gone on this subject, must be bold to tell them they are spar'd: tho' at the same time I am not ignorant that they interpret the mildness of a writer to them, as they do the mercy of the government; in the one they think it fear, and conclude it weakness in the other. The best way for them to confute me is, as I before advis'd the Papists, to disclaim their principles and renounce their practices. We shall all be glad to think them true Englishmen when they obey the king, and true Protestants when they conform to the Church discipline.

It remains that I acquaint the reader that the verses were written for an ingenious young gentleman, my friend, upon his translation of the *Critical History of the Old Testament*, compos'd by the learned Father Simon: the verses therefore are address'd to the translator of that work, and the style of them is, what it ought to be, epistolary.

If anyone be so lamentable a critic as to require the smoothness, the numbers, and the turn of heroic poetry in this poem, I must tell him

that, if he has not read Horace, I have studied him, and hope the style of his *Epistles* is not ill imitated here. The expressions of a poem design'd purely for instruction ought to be plain and natural, and yet majestic; for here the poet is presum'd to be a kind of lawgiver, and those three qualities which I have nam'd are proper to the legislative style. The florid, elevated, and figurative way is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul by shewing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life, or less; but instruction is to be given by shewing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reason'd into truth.

## RELIGIO LAICI

DIM as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring travelers,
Is Reason to the soul; and, as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear,
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight;
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.
Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause, to nature's secret head;
And found that one first principle must be:
But what, or who, that UNIVERSAL HE;
Whether some soul incompassing this ball,
Unmade, unmov'd; yet making, moving all;
Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leapt into form, (the noble work of chance;)
Or this great all was from eternity;
Not ev'n the Stagirite himself could see,
And Epicurus guess'd as well as he:
As blindly grop'd they for a future state;
As rashly judg'd of providence and fate:
But least of all could there endeavors find
What most concern'd the good of humankind;
For happiness was never to be found,
But vanish'd from 'em like enchanted ground.

Opinions of the several sects of philosophers concerning the *Summum Bonum*.

One thought content the good to be enjoy'd;
This every little accident destroy'd:
The wiser madmen did for virtue toil,
A thorny, or at best a barren soil;
In pleasure some their glutton souls would steep,
But found their line too short, the well too deep,
And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep.
Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,
Without a center where to fix the soul;
In this wild maze their vain endeavors end:
How can the less the greater comprehend?
Or finite reason reach Infinity?
For what could fathom GOD were more than He.
The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground;

System of Deism.

Cries: "Εὕρεκα, the mighty secret's found:
God is that spring of good; supreme and best;
We, made to serve, and in that service blest."
If so, some rules of worship must be given,
Distributed alike to all by Heaven:
Else God were partial, and to some denied
The means his justice should for all provide.
This general worship is to PRAISE and PRAY,
One part to borrow blessings, one to pay;
And when frail nature slides into offense,
The sacrifice for crimes is penitence.
Yet, since th' effects of providence, we find,
Are variously dispens'd to humankind;
That vice triumphs, and virtue suffers here,
(A brand that sovereign justice cannot bear;)
Our reason prompts us to a future state,
The last appeal from fortune and from fate:
Where God's all-righteous ways will be declar'd,
The bad meet punishment, the good reward.
Thus man by his own strength to heaven would soar,
And would not be oblig'd to God for more.

Of reveal'd Religion.

Vain, wretched creature, how art thou misled
To think thy wit these godlike notions bred!

These truths are not the product of thy mind,
But dropp'd from heaven, and of a nobler kind.
Reveal'd Religion first inform'd thy sight,
And Reason saw not, till Faith sprung the light.
Hence all thy natural worship takes the source:
'T is revelation what thou think'st discourse.
Else, how com'st thou to see these truths so clear,
Which so obscure to heathens did appear?
Not Plato these, nor Aristotle found;
Nor he whose wisdom oracles renown'd. Socrates.
Hast thou a wit so deep, or so sublime,
Or canst thou lower dive, or higher climb?
Canst thou, by Reason, more of Godhead know
Than Plutarch, Seneca, or Cicero?
Those giant wits, in happier ages born,
(When arms and arts did Greece and Rome adorn,)
Knew no such system; no such piles could raise
Of natural worship, built on pray'r and praise,
To One Sole God:
Nor did remorse to expiate sin prescribe,
But slew their fellow creatures for a bribe:
The guiltless victim groan'd for their offense,
And cruelty and blood was penitence.
If sheep and oxen could atone for men,
Ah! at how cheap a rate the rich might sin!
And great oppressors might Heaven's wrath beguile,
By offering his own creatures for a spoil!
Dar'st thou, poor worm, offend Infinity?
And must the terms of peace be given by thee?
Then thou art Justice in the last appeal:
Thy easy God instructs thee to rebel;
And, like a king remote, and weak, must take
What satisfaction thou art pleas'd to make.
But if there be a pow'r too just and strong
To wink at crimes, and bear unpunish'd wrong;
Look humbly upward, see his will disclose
The forfeit first, and then the fine impose:
A mulct thy poverty could never pay,
Had not eternal wisdom found the way,
And with celestial wealth supplied thy store:
His justice makes the fine, his mercy quits the score.
See God descending in thy human frame;
Th' offended suff'ring in th' offender's name;
All thy misdeeds to him imputed see,
And all his righteousness devolv'd on thee.
For granting we have sinn'd, and that th' offense
Of man is made against Omnipotence,
Some price that bears proportion must be paid,
And infinite with infinite be weigh'd.
See then the Deist lost: remorse for vice,
Not paid; or paid, inadequate in price:
What farther means can Reason now direct,
Or what relief from human wit expect?
That shews us sick; and sadly are we sure
Still to be sick, till Heav'n reveal the cure:
If then Heav'n's will must needs be understood,
(Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good,)
Let all records of will reveal'd be shown;
With Scripture all in equal balance thrown,
And our one sacred book will be that one.
Proof needs not here, for whether we compare
That impious, idle, superstitious ware
Of rites, lustrations, offerings, (which before,
In various ages, various countries bore,)
With Christian faith and virtues, we shall find
None answ'ring the great ends of humankind,
But this one rule of life, that shews us best
How God may be appeas'd, and mortals blest.
Whether from length of time its worth we draw,
The world is scarce more ancient than the law:
Heav'n's early care prescrib'd for every age;
First, in the soul, and after, in the page.
Or, whether more abstractedly we look,
Or on the writers, or the written book,
Whence, but from heav'n, could men unskill'd in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,

Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.
If on the book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent heathens prove the story true;
The doctrine, miracles; which must convince,
For Heav'n in them appeals to human sense:
And tho' they prove not, they confirm the cause,
When what is taught agrees with nature's laws.
Then for the style; majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line:
Commanding words; whose force is still the same
As the first fiat that produc'd our frame.
All faiths beside or did by arms ascend,
Or sense indulg'd has made mankind their friend:
This only doctrine does our lusts oppose,
Unfed by nature's soil, in which it grows;
Cross to our interests, curbing sense and sin;
Oppress'd without, and undermin'd within,
It thrives thro' pain; its own tormentors tires;
And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
To what can Reason such effects assign,
Transcending nature, but to laws divine?
Which in that sacred volume are contain'd;
Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordain'd.
But stay: the Deist here will urge anew, Objection of the Deist.
No supernatural worship can be true;
Because a general law is that alone
Which must to all, and everywhere, be known:
A style so large as not this book can claim,
Nor aught that bears reveal'd Religion's name.
'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's birth
Is gone thro' all the habitable earth;
But still that text must be confin'd alone
To what was then inhabited, and known:
And what provision could from thence accrue
To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new?
In other parts it helps, that, ages past,
The Scriptures there were known, and were imbrac'd,
Till Sin spread once again the shades of night:
What's that to these who never saw the light?
Of all objections this indeed is chief The objection answer'd.
To startle Reason, stagger frail Belief:
We grant, 't is true, that Heav'n from human sense
Has hid the secret paths of Providence;
But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy, may
Find ev'n for those bewilder'd souls a way:
If from his nature foes may pity claim,
Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his name.
And tho' no name be for salvation known,
But that of his eternal Son's alone;
Who knows how far transcending goodness can
Extend the merits of that Son to man?
Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead,
Or ignorance invincible may plead?
Not only charity bids hope the best,
But more the great apostle has express'd:
That if the Gentiles (whom no law inspir'd)
By nature did what was by law requir'd;
They, who the written rule had never known,
Were to themselves both rule and law alone:
To nature's plain indictment they shall plead,
And by their conscience be condemn'd or freed.
Most righteous doom! because a rule reveal'd
Is none to those from whom it was conceal'd.
Then those who follow'd Reason's dictates right,
Liv'd up, and lifted high their natural light;
With Socrates may see their Maker's face,
While thousand rubric-martyrs want a place.
Nor does it balk my charity, to find
Th' Egyptian bishop of another mind:
For tho' his creed eternal truth contains,
'T is hard for man to doom to endless pains
All who believ'd not all his zeal requir'd,
Unless he first could prove he was inspir'd.

Then let us either think he meant to say
This faith, where publish'd, was the only way;
Or else conclude that, Arius to confute,
The good old man, too eager in dispute,
Flew high; and, as his Christian fury rose,
Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose.
Thus far my charity this path has tried;
(A much unskilful, but well-meaning guide:)
Yet what they are, ev'n these crude thoughts were bred
By reading that which better thou hast read:
Thy matchless author's work; which thou, my friend,
By well translating better dost commend:
Those youthful hours which of thy equals most
In toys have squander'd, or in vice have lost,
Those hours hast thou to nobler use employ'd;
And the severe delights of truth enjoy'd.
Witness this weighty book, in which appears
The crabbed toil of many thoughtful years,
Spent by thy author in the sifting care
Of Rabbins' old sophisticated ware
From gold divine; which he who well can sort
May afterwards make algebra a sport:
A treasure, which if country curates buy,
They Junius and Tremellius may defy;
Save pains in various readings and translations,
And without Hebrew make most learn'd quotations:
A work so full with various learning fraught,
So nicely ponder'd, yet so strongly wrought,
As nature's height and art's last hand requir'd;
As much as man could compass, uninspir'd.
Where we may see what errors have been made
Both in the copier's and translator's trade;
How Jewish, Popish interests have prevail'd,
And where infallibility has fail'd.

Digression to the translator of Father Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament.*

For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,
Have found our author not too much a priest:
For fashion sake he seems to have recourse
To Pope, and councils, and tradition's force;
But he that old traditions could subdue,
Could not but find the weakness of the new:
If Scripture, tho' deriv'd from heav'nly birth,
Has been but carelessly preserv'd on earth;
If God's own people, who of God before
Knew what we know, and had been promis'd more,
In fuller terms, of Heaven's assisting care,
And who did neither time nor study spare
To keep this book untainted, unperplex'd,
Let in gross errors to corrupt the text,
Omitted paragraphs, embroil'd the sense,
With vain traditions stopp'd the gaping fence,
Which every common hand pull'd up with ease;
What safety from such brushwood-helps as these?
If written words from time are not secur'd,
How can we think have oral sounds endur'd?
Which thus transmitted, if one mouth has fail'd,
Immortal lies on ages are intail'd;
And that some such have been, is prov'd too plain;
If we consider interest, Church, and gain.
"O, but," says one, "tradition set aside,
Where can we hope for an unerring guide?
For since th' original Scripture has been lost,
All copies disagreeing, maim'd the most,
Or Christian faith can have no certain ground,
Or truth in Church tradition must be found."
Such an omniscient Church we wish indeed;
'Twere worth both Testaments; and cast in the Creed:
But if this mother be a guide so sure,
As can all doubts resolve, all truth secure,
Then her infallibility as well
Where copies are corrupt or lame can tell;
Restore lost canon with as little pains,
As truly explicate what still remains;

Of the infallibility of tradition in general.

Which yet no council dare pretend to do,
Unless like Esdras they could write it new:
Strange confidence, still to interpret true,
Yet not be sure that all they have explain'd,
Is in the blest original contain'd.
More safe, and much more modest 't is, to say
God would not leave mankind without a way;
And that the Scriptures, tho' not everywhere
Free from corruption, or intire, or clear,
Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, intire,
In all things which our needful faith require.
If others in the same glass better see,
'T is for themselves they look, but not for me:
For MY salvation must its doom receive,
Not from what OTHERS but what *I* believe.
Must all tradition then be set aside? — Objection in behalf of tradition, urg'd by Father Simon.
This to affirm were ignorance or pride.
Are there not many points, some needful sure
To saving faith, that Scripture leaves obscure?
Which every sect will wrest a several way
(For what one sect interprets, all sects may):
We hold, and say we prove from Scripture plain,
That Christ is GOD; the bold Socinian
From the same Scripture urges he 's but MAN.
Now what appeal can end th' important suit;
Both parts talk loudly, but the rule is mute?
Shall I speak plain, and in a nation free
Assume an honest layman's liberty?
I think (according to my little skill,
To my own Mother Church submitting still)
That many have been sav'd, and many may,
Who never heard this question brought in play.
Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,
Plods on to heaven, and ne'er is at a loss;
For the strait gate would be made straiter yet,
Were none admitted there but men of wit.
The few by nature form'd, with learning fraught,
Born to instruct, as others to be taught,
Must study well the sacred page, and see
Which doctrine, this, or that, does best agree
With the whole tenor of the work divine,
And plainliest points to Heaven's reveal'd design;
Which exposition flows from genuine sense,
And which is forc'd by wit and eloquence.
Not that tradition's parts are useless here,
When general, old, disinteress'd and clear:
That ancient Fathers thus expound the page
Gives truth the reverend majesty of age;
Confirms its force, by biding every test;
For best authority's next rules are best.
And still the nearer to the spring we go,
More limpid, more unsoil'd the waters flow.
Thus, first traditions were a proof alone,
Could we be certain such they were, so known;
But since some flaws in long descent may be,
They make not truth, but probability.
Even Arius and Pelagius durst provoke
To what the centuries preceding spoke.
Such difference is there in an oft-told tale;
But truth by its own sinews will prevail.
Tradition written therefore more commends
Authority, than what from voice descends;
And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
Rolls down to us the sacred history,
Which, from the Universal Church receiv'd,
Is tried, and after for itself believ'd.
The partial Papists would infer from hence — The second objection.
Their Church, in last resort, should judge the sense;
But first they would assume, with wondrous art, — Answer to the objection.
Themselves to be the whole, who are but part
Of that vast frame, the Church; yet grant they were
The handers down, can they from thence infer
A right t' interpret? or would they alone
Who brought the present, claim it for their own?

The book's a common largess to mankind,
Not more for them than every man design'd;
The welcome news is in the letter found;
The carrier's not commission'd to expound.
It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
In all things needful to be known, is plain.
In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance,
A gainful trade their clergy did advance;
When want of learning kept the laymen low,
And none but priests were authoriz'd to know;
When what small knowledge was, in them did dwell,
And he a god who could but read or spell:
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail;
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail;
But still expounded what she sold or gave,
To keep it in her power to damn and save:
Scripture was scarce, and, as the market went,
Poor laymen took salvation on content;
As needy men take money, good or bad:
God's word they had not, but the priest's they had.
Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
The lawyer still was certain to be paid.
In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well,
That by long use they grew infallible:
At last, a knowing age began t' enquire
If they the book, or that did them inspire;
And, making narrower search, they found, tho' late,
That what they thought the priest's was their estate,
Taught by the will produc'd, (the written word,)
How long they had been cheated on record.
Then every man who saw the title fair
Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share;
Consulted soberly his private good,
And sav'd himself as cheap as e'er he could.
'T is true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence,)
This good had full as bad a consequence:
The book thus put in every vulgar hand,
Which each presum'd he best could understand,
The common rule was made the common prey,
And at the mercy of the rabble lay.
The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,
And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd:
The spirit gave the doctoral degree;
And every member of a company
Was of his trade and of the Bible free.
Plain truths enough for needful use they found,
But men would still be itching to expound:
Each was ambitious of th' obscurest place,
No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from GRACE.
Study and pains were now no more their care;
Texts were explain'd by fasting and by prayer:
This was the fruit the private spirit brought,
Occasion'd by great zeal and little thought.
While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,
About the sacred viands buzz and swarm,
The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood,
And turns to maggots what was meant for food.
A thousand daily sects rise up and die;
A thousand more the perish'd race supply:
So all we make of Heaven's discover'd will
Is, not to have it, or to use it ill.
The danger's much the same; on several shelves
If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.
What then remains, but, waiving each extreme,
The tides of ignorance and pride to stem?
Neither so rich a treasure to forego;
Nor proudly seek beyond our pow'r to know:
Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe are few and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need,
And every man will make himself a creed,
In doubtful questions 't is the safest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say;
For 't is not likely we should higher soar
In search of heav'n, than all the Church before;

Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see
The Scripture and the Fathers disagree.
If, after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will;)
'T is some relief that points not clearly known
Without much hazard may be let alone:
And after hearing what our Church can say,
If still our Reason runs another way,
That private Reason 't is more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
For points obscure are of small use to learn;
But common quiet is mankind's concern.
Thus have I made my own opinions clear;
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear:
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse, I chose,
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose;
For while from sacred truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's, or Tom Sha—ll's rhymes will serve.

## TO THE PIOUS MEMORY OF THE ACCOMPLISH'D YOUNG LADY, MRS. ANNE KILLIGREW

### EXCELLENT IN THE TWO SISTER-ARTS OF POESY AND PAINTING, AN ODE

[ Publ. 1685]

[Anne Killigrew, daughter of Henry Killigrew, divine, and niece of the dramatists Thomas and William Killigrew, was born in 1660, and died in June, 1685. An edition of her *Poems* was licensed for the press on September 30 of that year.]

I

Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new pluck'd from paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighboring star,
Thou roll'st above us, in thy wand'ring race,
Or, in procession fix'd and regular,
Mov'd with the heavens' majestic pace;
Or, call'd to more superior bliss,
Thou tread'st, with seraphims, the vast abyss:
Whatever happy region is thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
(Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since heav'n's eternal year is thine.)
Hear then a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse,
In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practice here,
When thy first fruits of poesy were giv'n,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there;
While yet a young probationer,
And candidate of heav'n.

II

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfus'd into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
(An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.)
But if thy preëxisting soul
Was form'd, at first, with myriads more,
It did thro' all the mighty poets roll,
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.
If so, then cease thy flight, *O heav'n-born mind!*
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore;
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return, to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

III

May we presume to say, that at thy birth
New joy was sprung in heav'n, as well as here on earth?
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And ev'n the most malicious were in trine.
Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tun'd it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth.
And then, if ever, mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres!
And if no clust'ring swarm of bees

On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,
'T was that such vulgar miracles
Heav'n had not leisure to renew:
For all the blest fraternity of love
Solemniz'd there thy birth, and kept thy holiday above.

IV

O gracious God! how far have we
Profan'd thy heav'nly gift of poesy!
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordain'd above
For tongues of angels, and for hymns of love!
O wretched we! why were we hurried down
This lubric and adult'rate age,
(Nay, added fat pollutions of our own,)
T' increase the steaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t' excuse our *second fall?*
Let this thy *vestal*, Heav'n, atone for all:
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoil'd,
Unmix'd with foreign filth, and undefil'd;
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child!

V

Art she had none, yet wanted none;
For nature did that want supply:
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigor did her verse adorn
That it seem'd borrow'd, where 't was only born.
Her morals too were in her bosom bred,
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of books, her father's life, she read.
And to be read herself she need not fear;
Each test, and ev'ry light, her Muse will bear,
Tho' Epictetus with his lamp were there.
Ev'n love (for love sometimes her Muse express'd)
Was but a *lambent flame* which play'd about her breast,
Light as the vapors of a morning dream:
So cold herself, whilst she such warmth express'd,
'T was Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

VI

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,
For *painture* near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.
*A chamber of dependences* was fram'd,
(As conquerors will never want pretense,
When arm'd, to justify th' offense,)
And the whole fief in right of poetry she claim'd.
The country open lay without defense;
For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with ev'ry lineament;
And all the large demains which the *Dumb Sister* sway'd,
All bow'd beneath her government;
Receiv'd in triumph wheresoe'er she went.
Her pencil drew whate'er her soul design'd,
And oft the happy draught surpass'd the image in her mind.
The *sylvan* scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,
Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods,
Which, as in mirrors, shew'd the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear:
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome, or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns broken lie,
And, tho' defac'd, the wonder of the eye:
What nature, art, bold fiction, e'er durst frame,
Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopled ark the whole creation bore.

VII

The scene then chang'd: with bold erected look
Our martial king the sight with reverence strook;
For, not content t' express his outward part,
Her hand call'd out the image of his heart:
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts were figur'd there,
As when, by magic, ghosts are made appear.
Our Phœnix queen was portray'd too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observ'd, as well as heav'nly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands;
Before a train of heroines was seen,
In beauty foremost, as in rank the queen.
Thus nothing to her *genius* was denied,
But like a ball of fire the further thrown,
Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry side.
What next she had design'd, Heaven only knows;
To such immod'rate growth her conquest rose
That fate alone its progress could oppose.

VIII

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,
The well-proportion'd shape, and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes:
In earth the much-lamented virgin lies!
Not wit, nor piety could fate prevent;
Nor was the cruel Destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life and beauty too;
But, like a harden'd felon, took a pride
To work more mischievously slow,
And plunder'd first, and then destroy'd.
O double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relic, and deface the shrine!
But thus Orinda died:
Heav'n, by the same disease, did both translate;
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

IX

Meantime her warlike brother on the seas
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.
Ah, generous youth, that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here!
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wreck'd at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou kenn'st from far
Among the Pleiads a new kindled star;
If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
'T is she that shines in that propitious light.

X

When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;
When in the Valley of Jehosaphat
The judging God shall close the book of fate,
And there the last assizes keep
For those who wake and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly
From the four corners of the sky;
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those cloth'd with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound,
For they are cover'd with the lightest ground;
And straight, with inborn vigor, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shalt go,
As harbinger of heav'n, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learn'd below.

## A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

[About 1683 a musical society in London began the custom of celebrating November 22, the Feast of St. Cecilia, the patroness of music, by a public concert. Dryden wrote the following ode, which was set to music by an Italian composer, Giovanni Battista Draghi, for the performance of 1687.]

I

From harmony, from heav'nly harmony
This universal frame began:
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high:
"Arise, ye more than dead."
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's pow'r obey.
From harmony, from heav'nly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Thro' all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

II

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!
When Jubal struck the corded shell,
His list'ning brethren stood around,
And, wond'ring, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell!

III

The Trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thund'ring Drum
Cries: "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 't is too late to retreat."

IV

The soft complaining Flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling Lute.

V

Sharp Violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI

But O! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred Organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heav'nly ways
To mend the choirs above.

VII

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder high'r:
When to her Organ vocal breath was giv'n,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd,
Mistaking earth for heav'n.

GRAND CHORUS

*As from the pow'r of sacred lays*
*The spheres began to move,*
*And sung the great Creator's praise*
*To all the blest above;*
*So, when the last and dreadful hour*
*This crumbling pageant shall devour,*
*The Trumpet shall be heard on high,*
*The dead shall live, the living die,*
*And Music shall untune the sky.*

## ALEXANDER'S FEAST

### OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC; AN ODE IN HONOR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY

[Dryden wrote this greatest of his lyric poems for the celebration of the Feast of St. Cecilia (November 22), 1697.]

I

'T was at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were plac'd around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound:
(So should desert in arms be crown'd.)

The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride
In flow'r of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS

*Happy, happy, happy pair!*
*None but the brave,*
*None but the brave,*
*None but the brave deserves the fair.*

II

Timotheus, plac'd on high
Amid the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heav'nly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the pow'r of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form belied the god:
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia press'd;
And while he sought her snowy breast:
Then, round her slender waist he curl'd,
And stamp'd an image of himself, a sov'reign of the world.
The list'ning crowd admire the lofty sound;
"A present deity," they shout around;
"A present deity," the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

*With ravish'd ears*
*The monarch hears,*
*Assumes the god,*
*Affects to nod,*
*And seems to shake the spheres.*

III

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets; beat the drums;
Flush'd with a purple grace
He shews his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS

*Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,*
*Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:*
*Rich the treasure,*
*Sweet the pleasure,*
*Sweet is pleasure after pain.*

IV

Sooth'd with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes; and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise;
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he heav'n and earth defied,
Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And welt'ring in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.

With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

*Revolving in his alter'd soul*
*The various turns of chance below;*
*And, now and then, a sigh he stole;*
*And tears began to flow.*

V

The mighty master smil'd, to see
That love was in the next degree:
'T was but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.
"War," he sung, "is toil and trouble;
Honor, but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying:
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying;
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee."

The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS

*The prince, unable to conceal his pain,*
*Gaz'd on the fair*
*Who caus'd his care,*
*And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,*
*Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:*
*At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,*
*The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.*

VI

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has rais'd up his head:
As awak'd from the dead,
And amaz'd, he stares around.
"Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries,
"See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods!"
The princes applaud, with a furious joy;
And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

CHORUS

*And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;*
*Thais led the way,*
*To light him to his prey,*
*And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.*

VII

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
While organs yet were mute;
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last, divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown:
He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

GRAND CHORUS

*At last, divine Cecilia came,*
*Inventress of the vocal frame;*
*The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,*
*Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,*
*And added length to solemn sounds,*
*With nature's mother wit, and arts unknown before.*
*Let old Timotheus yield the prize,*
*Or both divide the crown;*
*He rais'd a mortal to the skies;*
*She drew an angel down.*

## THEODORE AND HONORIA

FROM BOCCACE

[Publ 1700]

Of all the cities in Romanian lands,
The chief, and most renown'd, Ravenna stands,
Adorn'd in ancient times with arms and arts,
And rich inhabitants, with generous hearts.
But Theodore the brave, above the rest,
With gifts of fortune and of nature blest,
The foremost place for wealth and honor held,
And all in feats of chivalry excell'd.
This noble youth to madness lov'd a dame,
Of high degree; Honoria was her name;
Fair as the fairest, but of haughty mind,
And fiercer than became so soft a kind;
Proud of her birth, (for equal she had none,)
The rest she scorn'd, but hated him alone.
His gifts, his constant courtship, nothing gain'd;
For she, the more he lov'd, the more disdain'd.
He liv'd with all the pomp he could devise,
At tilts and turnaments obtain'd the prize;
But found no favor in his lady's eyes:
Relentless as a rock, the lofty maid
Turn'd all to poison that he did or said:
Nor pray'rs, nor tears, nor offer'd vows could move;
The work went backward; and, the more he strove
T' advance his suit, the farther from her love.
Wearied at length, and wanting remedy,
He doubted oft, and oft resolv'd to die;
But pride stood ready to prevent the blow,
For who would die to gratify a foe?
His generous mind disdain'd so mean a fate;
That pass'd, his next endeavor was to hate.
But vainer that relief than all the rest;
The less he hop'd, with more desire possess'd;
Love stood the siege, and would not yield his breast.
Change was the next, but change deceiv'd his care;
He sought a fairer, but found none so fair.
He would have worn her out by slow degrees,
As men by fasting starve th' untam'd disease;
But present love requir'd a present ease.
Looking he feeds alone his famish'd eyes,
Feeds ling'ring death, but, looking not, he dies.
Yet still he chose the longest way to fate,
Wasting at once his life and his estate.
His friends beheld, and pitied him in vain,
For what advice can ease a lover's pain!
Absence, the best expedient they could find,
Might save the fortune, if not cure the mind:
This means they long propos'd, but little gain'd,
Yet after much pursuit at length obtain'd.
Hard you may think it was to give consent,
But struggling with his own desires he went,
With large expense, and with a pompous train,
Provided as to visit France or Spain,
Or for some distant voyage o'er the main.
But Love had clipp'd his wings, and cut him short,
Confin'd within the purlieus of his court.
Three miles he went, nor farther could retreat;
His travels ended at his country seat:
To Chassi's pleasing plains he took his way,
There pitch'd his tents, and there resolv'd to stay.
The spring was in the prime; the neighb'ring grove
Supplied with birds, the choristers of love;
Music unbought, that minister'd delight
To morning walks, and lull'd his cares by night:
There he discharg'd his friends, but not th' expense
Of frequent treats, and proud magnificence.
He liv'd as kings retire, tho' more at large
From public business, yet with equal charge;
With house and heart still open to receive;
As well content as love would give him leave:

He would have liv'd more free ; but many a guest,
Who could forsake the friend, pursued the feast.
It happ'd one morning, as his fancy led,
Before his usual hour he left his bed,
To walk within a lonely lawn, that stood
On ev'ry side surrounded by the wood.
Alone he walk'd, to please his pensive mind,
And sought the deepest solitude to find :
'T was in a grove of spreading pines he stray'd ;
The winds within the quiv'ring branches play'd,
And dancing trees a mournful music made.
The place itself was suiting to his care,
Uncouth and salvage as the cruel fair.
He wander'd on, unknowing where he went,
Lost in the wood, and all on love intent:
The day already half his race had run,
And summon'd him to due repast at noon,
But Love could feel no hunger but his own.
Whilst list'ning to the murm'ring leaves he stood,
More than a mile immers'd within the wood,
At once the wind was laid; the whisp'ring sound
Was dumb; a rising earthquake rock'd the ground;
With deeper brown the grove was overspread:
A sudden horror seiz'd his giddy head,
And his ears tinkled, and his color fled.
Nature was in alarm; some danger nigh
Seem'd threaten'd, tho' unseen to mortal eye.
Unus'd to fear, he summon'd all his soul,
And stood collected in himself, and whole;
Not long: for soon a whirlwind rose around,
And from afar he heard a screaming sound,
As of a dame distress'd, who cried for aid,
And fill'd with loud laments the secret shade.
A thicket close beside the grove there stood,
With breers and brambles chok'd, and dwarfish wood;
From thence the noise, which now, approaching near,
With more distinguish'd notes invades his ear.
He rais'd his head, and saw a beauteous maid,
With hair dishevel'd, issuing thro' the shade;
Stripp'd of her clothes, and e'en those parts reveal'd,
Which modest Nature keeps from sight conceal'd.
Her face, her hands, her naked limbs were torn
With passing thro' the brakes and prickly thorn;
Two mastiffs gaunt and grim her flight pursued,
And oft their fasten'd fangs in blood embrued:
Oft they came up, and pinch'd her tender side,
"Mercy, O mercy, Heav'n," she ran, and cried;
When Heav'n was nam'd, they loos'd their hold again;
Then sprung she forth, they follow'd her amain.
Not far behind, a knight of swarthy face,
High on a coal-black steed pursued the chase;
With flashing flames his ardent eyes were fill'd,
And in his hands a naked sword he held:
He cheer'd the dogs to follow her who fled,
And vow'd revenge on her devoted head.
As Theodore was born of noble kind,
The brutal action rous'd his manly mind;
Mov'd with unworthy usage of the maid,
He, tho' unarm'd, resolv'd to give her aid.
A saplin pine he wrench'd from out the ground,
The readiest weapon that his fury found.
Thus furnish'd for offense, he cross'd the way
Betwixt the graceless villain and his prey.
The knight came thund'ring on, but, from afar,
Thus in imperious tone forbade the war:
"Cease, Theodore, to proffer vain relief,
Nor stop the vengeance of so just a grief;
But give me leave to seize my destin'd prey,
And let eternal justice take the way:
I but revenge my fate, disdain'd, betray'd,
And suff'ring death for this ungrateful maid."

He said, at once dismounting from the steed;
For now the hellhounds, with superior speed,
Had reach'd the dame, and, fast'ning on her side,
The ground with issuing streams of purple dyed.
Stood Theodore surpris'd in deadly fright,
With chatt'ring teeth, and bristling hair upright;
Yet arm'd with inborn worth: "Whate'er," said he,
"Thou art, who know'st me better than I thee;
Or prove thy rightful cause, or be defied."
The specter, fiercely staring, thus replied:
"Know, Theodore, thy ancestry I claim,
And Guido Cavalcanti was my name.
One common sire our fathers did beget,
My name and story some remember yet:
Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid,
When for my sins I lov'd this haughty maid;
Not less ador'd in life, nor serv'd by me,
Than proud Honoria now is lov'd by thee.
What did I not her stubborn heart to gain?
But all my vows were answer'd with disdain:
She scorn'd my sorrows, and despis'd my pain.
Long time I dragg'd my days in fruitless care;
Then, loathing life, and plung'd in deep despair,
To finish my unhappy life, I fell
On this sharp sword, and now am damn'd in hell.
"Short was her joy; for soon th' insulting maid
By Heav'n's decree in the cold grave was laid,
And, as in unrepenting sin she died,
Doom'd to the same bad place, is punish'd for her pride;
Because she deem'd I well deserv'd to die,
And made a merit of her cruelty.
There, then, we met; both tried and both were cast,
And this irrevocable sentence pass'd;
That she, whom I so long pursued in vain,
Should suffer from my hands a ling'ring pain:
Renew'd to life that she might daily die,
I daily doom'd to follow, she to fly.
No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
I seek her life (for love is none below):
As often as my dogs with better speed
Arrest her flight, is she to death decreed.
Then with this fatal sword, on which I died,
I pierce her open'd back, or tender side,
And tear that harden'd heart from out her breast,
Which, with her entrails, makes my hungry hounds a feast.
Nor lies she long, but, as her fates ordain,
Springs up to life, and fresh to second pain;
Is sav'd to-day, to-morrow to be slain."
This, vers'd in death, th' infernal knight relates,
And then for proof fulfill'd their common fates;
Her heart and bowels thro' her back he drew,
And fed the hounds that help'd him to pursue.
Stern look'd the fiend, as frustrate of his will,
Not half suffic'd, and greedy yet to kill.
And now the soul, expiring thro' the wound,
Had left the body breathless on the ground,
When thus the grisly specter spoke again:
"Behold the fruit of ill-rewarded pain:
As many months as I sustain'd her hate,
So many years is she condemn'd by fate
To daily death; and ev'ry several place
Conscious of her disdain, and my disgrace,
Must witness her just punishment, and be
A scene of triumph and revenge to me.
As in this grove I took my last farewell,
As on this very spot of earth I fell,
As Friday saw me die, so she my prey
Becomes ev'n here, on this revolving day."
Thus while he spoke, the virgin from the ground
Upstarted fresh, already clos'd the wound,
And, unconcern'd for all she felt before,
Precipitates her flight along the shore.
The hellhounds, as ungorg'd with flesh and blood,
Pursue their prey, and seek their wonted food;
The fiend remounts his courser, mends his pace,
And all the vision vanish'd from the place.
Long stood the noble youth oppress'd with awe,
And stupid at the wondrous things he saw,
Surpassing common faith, transgressing nature's law.

He would have been asleep, and wish'd to wake,
But dreams, he knew, no long impression make,
Tho' strong at first; if vision, to what end,
But such as must his future state portend,
His love the damsel, and himself the fiend?
But yet reflecting that it could not be
From Heav'n, which cannot impious acts decree,
Resolv'd within himself to shun the snare
Which Hell for his destruction did prepare;
And, as his better genius should direct,
From an ill cause to draw a good effect.
Inspir'd from Heav'n, he homeward took his way,
Nor pall'd his new design with long delay;
But of his train a trusty servant sent,
To call his friends together at his tent.
They came, and, usual salutations paid,
With words premeditated thus he said:
"What you have often counsel'd, to remove
My vain pursuit of unregarded love,
By thrift my sinking fortune to repair,
Tho' late, yet is at last become my care:
My heart shall be my own; my vast expense
Reduc'd to bounds, by timely providence.
This only I require; invite for me
Honoria, with her father's family,
Her friends, and mine; the cause I shall display,
On Friday next, for that's th' appointed day."
Well pleas'd were all his friends, the task was light;
The father, mother, daughter, they invite;
Hardly the dame was drawn to this repast;
But yet resolv'd, because it was the last.
The day was come, the guests invited came,
And, with the rest, th' inexorable dame;
A feast prepar'd with riotous expense,
Much cost, more care, and most magnificence.
The place ordain'd was in that haunted grove
Where the revenging ghost pursued his love;
The tables in a proud pavilion spread,
With flow'rs below, and tissue overhead:
The rest in rank; Honoria, chief in place,
Was artfully contriv'd to set her face
To front the thicket, and behold the chase.

The feast was serv'd, the time so well forecast,
That just when the dessert and fruits were plac'd,
The fiend's alarm began; the hollow sound
Sung in the leaves, the forest shook around,
Air blacken'd, roll'd the thunder, groan'd the ground.
Nor long before the loud laments arise
Of one distress'd, and mastiffs' mingled cries;
And first the dame came rushing thro' the wood,
And next the famish'd hounds that sought their food,
And grip'd her flanks, and oft essay'd their jaws in blood,
Last came the felon, on the sable steed,
Arm'd with his naked sword, and urg'd his dogs to speed.
She ran, and cried; her flight directly bent
(A guest unbidden) to the fatal tent,
The scene of death, and place ordain'd for punishment.
Loud was the noise, aghast was every guest;
The women shriek'd, the men forsook the feast;
The hounds at nearer distance hoarsely bay'd;
The hunter close pursued the visionary maid;
She rent the heav'n with loud laments, imploring aid.
The gallants, to protect the lady's right,
Their fauchions brandish'd at the grisly sprite;
High on his stirrups he provok'd the fight.
Then on the crowd he cast a furious look,
And wither'd all their strength before he strook:
"Back, on your lives! let be," said he, "my prey,
And let my vengeance take the destin'd way.
Vain are your arms, and vainer your defense,
Against th' eternal doom of Providence:
Mine is th' ungrateful maid by Heav'n design'd;
Mercy she would not give, nor mercy shall she find."

At this the former tale again he told
With thund'ring tone, and dreadful to behold.
Sunk were their hearts with horror of the crime,
Nor needed to be warn'd a second time,
But bore each other back: some knew the face,
And all had heard the much lamented case
Of him who fell for love, and this the fatal place.
And now th' infernal minister advanc'd,
Seiz'd the due victim, and with fury launch'd
Her back, and, piercing thro' her inmost heart,
Drew backward as before th' offending part.
The reeking entrails next he tore away,
And to his meager mastiffs made a prey.
The pale assistants on each other star'd,
With gaping mouths for issuing words prepar'd;
The stillborn sounds upon the palate hung,
And died imperfect on the falt'ring tongue.
The fright was general; but the female band
(A helpless train) in more confusion stand:
With horror shudd'ring, on a heap they run,
Sick at the sight of hateful justice done;
For conscience rung th' alarm, and made the case their own.
So spread upon a lake, with upward eye,
A plump of fowl behold their foe on high;
They close their trembling troop, and all attend
On whom the sousing eagle will descend.
But most the proud Honoria fear'd th' event,
And thought to her alone the vision sent.
Her guilt presents to her distracted mind
Heav'n's justice, Theodore's revengeful kind,
And the same fate to the same sin assign'd—
Already sees herself the monster's prey,
And feels her heart and entrails torn away.
'T was a mute scene of sorrow, mix'd with fear;
Still on the table lay th' unfinish'd cheer:
The knight and hungry mastiffs stood around,
The mangled dame lay breathless on the ground:
When on a sudden, reinspir'd with breath,
Again she rose, again to suffer death;
Nor stay'd the hellhounds, nor the hunter stay'd,
But follow'd, as before, the flying maid;
Th' avenger took from earth th' avenging sword,
And mounting light as air his sable steed he spurr'd:
The clouds dispell'd, the sky resum'd her light,
And Nature stood recover'd of her fright.
But fear, the last of ills, remain'd behind,
And horror heavy sat on ev'ry mind.
Nor Theodore incourag'd more his feast,
But sternly look'd, as hatching in his breast
Some deep design; which when Honoria view'd,
The fresh impulse her former fright renew'd:
She thought herself the trembling dame who fled,
And him the grisly ghost that spurr'd th' infernal steed;
The more dismay'd, for when the guests withdrew,
Their courteous host, saluting all the crew,
Regardless pass'd her o'er, nor grac'd with kind adieu.
That sting infix'd within her haughty mind,
The downfall of her empire she divin'd;
And her proud heart with secret sorrow pin'd.
Home as they went, the sad discourse renew'd,
Of the relentless dame to death pursued,
And of the sight obscene so lately view'd.
None durst arraign the righteous doom she bore;
Ev'n they who pitied most, yet blam'd her more:
The parallel they needed not to name,
But in the dead they damn'd the living dame.
At ev'ry little noise she look'd behind,
For still the knight was present to her mind;
And anxious oft she started on the way,
And thought the horseman ghost came thund'ring for his prey.
Return'd, she took her bed, with little rest,
But in short slumbers dreamt the funeral feast:

Awak'd, she turn'd her side, and slept again;
The same black vapors mounted in her brain,
And the same dreams return'd with double pain.
Now forc'd to wake, because afraid to sleep,
Her blood all fever'd, with a furious leap
She sprung from bed, distracted in her mind,
And fear'd, at ev'ry step, a twitching sprite behind.
Darkling and desp'rate, with a stagg'ring pace,
Of death afraid, and conscious of disgrace;
Fear, pride, remorse, at once her heart assail'd;
Pride put remorse to flight, but fear prevail'd.
Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,
Her soul forethought the fiend would change his game,
And her pursue, or Theodore be slain,
And two ghosts join their packs to hunt her o'er the plain.
This dreadful image so possess'd her mind,
That desp'rate any succor else to find,
She ceas'd all farther hope; and now began
To make reflection on th' unhappy man.
Rich, brave, and young, who past expression lov'd,
Proof to disdain, and not to be remov'd:
Of all the men respected and admir'd;
Of all the dames, except herself, desir'd —
Why not of her, preferr'd above the rest
By him with knightly deeds, and open love profess'd?
So had another been, where he his vows address'd.
This quell'd her pride, yet other doubts remain'd,
That, once disdaining, she might be disdain'd.
The fear was just, but greater fear prevail'd,
Fear of her life by hellish hounds assail'd:
He took a low'ring leave, but who can tell
What outward hate might inward love conceal?
Her sex's arts she knew, and why not, then,
Might deep dissembling have a place in men?
Here hope began to dawn; resolv'd to try,
She fix'd on this her utmost remedy:
Death was behind, but hard it was to die.
'Twas time enough at last on death to call,
The precipice in sight: a shrub was all
That kindly stood betwixt to break the fatal fall.
One maid she had, belov'd above the rest;
Secure of her, the secret she confess'd;
And now the cheerful light her fears dispell'd,
She with no winding turns the truth conceal'd,
But put the woman off, and stood reveal'd:
With faults confess'd commission'd her to go,
If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe.
The welcome message made was soon receiv'd;
'T was what he wish'd, and hop'd, but scarce believ'd:
Fate seem'd a fair occasion to present;
He knew the sex, and fear'd she might repent,
Should he delay the moment of consent.
There yet remain'd to gain her friends (a care
The modesty of maidens well might spare);
But she with such a zeal the cause embrac'd,
(As women, where they will, are all in haste,)
That father, mother, and the kin beside,
Were overborne by fury of the tide:
With full consent of all she chang'd her state,
Resistless in her love, as in her hate.
By her example warn'd, the rest beware;
More easy, less imperious, were the fair;
And that one hunting, which the devil design'd
For one fair female, lost him half the kind.

# ALEXANDER POPE

## ODE ON SOLITUDE

[Written perhaps in 1700]

HAPPY the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Bless'd who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day;

Sound sleep by night: study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

## EPISTLE TO MRS. BLOUNT, WITH THE WORKS OF VOITURE

[To Teresa Blount. First published in 1712]

IN these gay thoughts the Loves and Graces shine,
And all the writer lives in ev'ry line;
His easy Art may happy Nature seem,
Trifles themselves are elegant in him.
Sure to charm all was his peculiar fate,
Who without flatt'ry pleas'd the Fair and Great;
Still with esteem no less convers'd than read,
With wit well-natured, and with books well-bred:
His heart his mistress and his friend did share,
His time the Muse, the witty, and the fair.
Thus wisely careless, innocently gay,
Cheerful he play'd the trifle, Life, away;
Till Fate scarce felt his gentle breath suppress,
As smiling infants sport themselves to rest.
Ev'n rival Wits did Voiture's death deplore,
And the gay mourn'd who never mourn'd before;
The truest hearts for Voiture heav'd with sighs,
Voiture was wept by all the brightest eyes:
The Smiles and Loves had died in Voiture's death,
But that for ever in his lines they breathe.
Let the strict life of graver mortals be
A long, exact, and serious Comedy;
In ev'ry scene some Moral let it teach,
And, if it can, at once both please and preach.
Let mine an innocent gay farce appear,
And more diverting still than regular,
Have Humour, Wit, a native Ease and Grace,
Tho' not too strictly bound to Time and Place:
Critics in Wit, or Life, are hard to please,
Few write to those, and none can live to these.
Too much your Sex is by their forms confin'd,
Severe to all, but most to Womankind;
Custom, grown blind with Age, must be your guide;
Your pleasure is a vice, but not your pride;
By Nature yielding, stubborn but for fame,
Made slaves by honour, and made fools by shame;
Marriage may all those petty tyrants chase;
But sets up one, a greater, in their place;
Well might you wish for change by those accurst,
But the last tyrant ever proves the worst.

Still in constraint your suff'ring Sex remains,
Or bound in formal, or in real chains:
Whole years neglected, for some months ador'd,
The fawning Servant turns a haughty Lord.
Ah, quit not the free innocence of life,
For the dull glory of a virtuous Wife;
Nor let false shows, or empty titles please;
Aim not at Joy, but rest content with Ease.
The Gods, to curse Pamela with her pray'rs,
Gave the gilt coach and dappled Flanders mares,
The shining robes, rich jewels, beds of state,
And, to complete her bliss, a fool for mate.
She glares in Balls, front Boxes, and the Ring,
A vain, unquiet, glitt'ring, wretched thing!
Pride, Pomp, and State but reach her outward part;
She sighs, and is no Duchess at her heart.
But, Madam, if the fates withstand, and you
Are destin'd Hymen's willing victim too;
Trust not too much your now resistless charms,
Those Age or Sickness soon or late disarms:
Good humour only teaches charms to last,
Still makes new conquests, and maintains the past;
Love, rais'd on Beauty, will like that decay,
Our hearts may bear its slender chain a day;
As flow'ry bands in wantonness are worn,
A morning's pleasure, and at evening torn;
This binds in ties more easy, yet more strong,
The willing heart, and only holds it long.
Thus Voiture's early care still shone the same,
And Montausier was only changed in name;
By this, ev'n now they live, ev'n now they charm,
Their wit still sparkling, and their flames still warm.
Now crown'd with myrtle, on th' Elysian coast,
Amid those lovers, joys his gentle Ghost:
Pleas'd, while with smiles his happy lines you view,
And finds a fairer Rambouillet in you.
The brightest eyes of France inspired his Muse;
The brightest eyes of Britain now peruse;
And dead, as living, 't is our Author's pride
Still to charm those who charm the world beside.

## ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UNFORTUNATE LADY

[Publ. 1717]

What beck'ning ghost along the moonlight shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
'T is she! — but why that bleeding bosom gor'd?
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?
Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly! tell,
Is it, in Heav'n, a crime to love too well?
To bear too tender or too firm a heart,
To act a lover's or a Roman's part?
Is there no bright reversion in the sky
For those who greatly think, or bravely die?
Why bade ye else, ye Powers! her soul aspire
Above the vulgar flight of low desire?
Ambition first sprung from your blest abodes,
The glorious fault of Angels and of Gods:
Thence to their images on earth it flows,
And in the breasts of Kings and Heroes glows.
Most souls, 't is true, but peep out once an age,
Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage;
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres;
Like eastern Kings a lazy state they keep,
And, close confin'd to their own palace, sleep.
From these, perhaps (ere Nature bade her die),
Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky.
As into air the purer spirits flow,
And sep'rate from their kindred dregs below;
So flew the soul to its congenial place,
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.

But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,
Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's blood!
See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death;
Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.
Thus, if eternal justice rules the ball,
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall;
On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,
And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates;
There passengers shall stand, and pointing say
(While the long funerals blacken all the way),
Lo! these were they whose souls the furies steel'd,
And cursed with hearts unknowing how to yield.
Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow
For others' good, or melt at others' woe.
What can atone, O ever injured shade!
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear.
Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier;
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,
By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd.

What tho' no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show?
What tho' no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?
What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be dress'd,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow;
While angels with their silver wings o'er shade
The ground, now sacred by thy relics made.
So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
What once had Beauty, Titles, Wealth and Fame.
How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot;
A heap of dust alone remains of thee;
'T is all thou art, and all the proud shall be!
Poets themselves must fall like those they sung,
Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
Ev'n he whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays;
Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;
Life's idle bus'ness at one gasp be o'er,
The Muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!

# THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

## AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.
*Mart. Epig.* xii. 84.

'It appears by this motto,' says Pope, in a footnote supplied for Warburton's edition, 'that the following poem was written or published at the lady's request. But there are some other circumstances not unworthy relating. Mr. Caryll (a gentleman who was secretary to Queen Mary, wife of James II., whose fortunes he followed into France, author of the comedy of *Sir Solomon Single*, and of several translations in Dryden's *Miscellanies*) originally proposed it to him in a view of putting an end, by this piece of ridicule, to a quarrel that was risen between two noble families, those of Lord Petre and Mrs. Fermor, on the trifling occasion of his having cut off a lock of her hair. The author sent it to the lady, with whom he was acquainted; and she took it so well as to give about copies of it. That first sketch (we learn from one of his letters) was written in less than a fortnight, in 1711, in two cantos only, and it was so printed first, in a *Miscellany* of Bern. Lintot's, without the name of the author. But it was received so well that he made it more considerable the next year by the addition of the machinery of the Sylphs, and extended it to five cantos.'

### TO MRS. ARABELLA FERMOR

Madam, — It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to you. Yet you may bear me witness it was intended only to divert a few young ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a bookseller, you had the good-nature for my sake, to consent to the publication of one more correct: this I was forced to, before I had executed half my design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the critics, to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Dæmons, are made to act in a poem: for the ancient poets are in one respect like many modern ladies; let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These Machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a lady; but it is so much the concern of a poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms. The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book called *La Comte de Gabalis*, which, both in its title and size, is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these gentlemen, the four elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes, or Dæmons of earth, delight in mischief; but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the air, are the best-conditioned creatures imaginable; for, they say, any mortal may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, — an inviolate preservation of chastity.

As to the following cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the end (except the loss of your hair, which I always mention with reverence). The human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles you in nothing but in beauty.

If this poem had as many graces as there are in your person or in your mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the world half so uncensured as you have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, Madam,

Your most obedient, humble servant,
A. Pope.

## CANTO I

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing — This verse to *Caryll*, muse! is due:
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
In tasks so bold can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?
Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day.
Now lapdogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers just at twelve awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian Sylph prolong'd the balmy rest.
'T was he had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her head;
A youth more glitt'ring than a Birthnight Beau
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)
Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say:
'Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!
If e'er one vision touch'd thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught —
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by Angel-powers,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flowers;
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learned pride conceal'd,
To maids alone and children are reveal'd:
What tho' no credit doubting Wits may give?
The fair and innocent shall still believe.
Know, then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky:
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the Ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclosed in woman's beauteous mould;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And, tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre, after death survive.
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire.
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a Gnome
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.
'Know further yet: whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embraced;
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark;

When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Tho' Honour is the word with men below.
'Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestin'd to the Gnome's embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdain'd, and love denied:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, "Your Grace" salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a Beau.
'Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The Sylphs thro' mystic mazes guide their way;
Thro' all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from every part,
They shift the moving toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.
'Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But Heav'n reveals not what, or how or where.
Warn'd by the Sylph, O pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!'
He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanish'd from thy head.
And now, unveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the cosmetic powers.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears;
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The Fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

## CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams

Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-dress'd youths around her shone,
But every eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide;
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you 'll forget 'em all.
This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' adventurous Baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspired.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask if fraud or force attain'd his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious Heav'n, and every Power ador'd,
But chiefly Love — to Love an altar built
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The Powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer,
The rest the winds dispers'd in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides;
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And soften'd sounds along the waters die:
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay.
All but the Sylph — with careful thoughts oppress
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe
That seem'd but zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head was Ariel placed;
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:
'Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear.
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Dæmons, hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assign'd
By laws eternal to th' aërial kind.
Some in the fields of purest ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day:

Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets thro' the boundless sky:
Some, less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others, on earth, o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British Throne.

'Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care;
To save the Powder from too rude a gale;
Nor let th' imprison'd Essences exhale;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in showers
A brighter Wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes and inspire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow.

'This day black omens threat the brightest Fair,
That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force or slight;
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade,
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade,
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall.
Haste, then, ye Spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

'To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat;
Oft have we known that sev'n-fold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs of whale:
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.

'Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins:
Be stopp'd in vials, or transfix'd with pins,
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye;
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogg'd he beats his silken wings in vain,
Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a rivell'd flower:
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!'

He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

## CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;

Here, thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea.
Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that.*
Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom,
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred Nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,
Then each according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
Behold four Kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair Queens, whose hands sustain a flower
Th' expressive emblem of their softer power;
Four Knaves, in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand
And party-colour'd troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skilful nymph reviews her force with care;
'Let Spades be trumps!' she said, and trumps they were.
Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.
As many more Manillio forced to yield,
And march'd a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto follow'd, but his fate more hard
Gain'd but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight reveal'd;
The rest his many colour'd robe conceal'd.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Loo,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade.
Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron Fate inclines the field.
His warlike amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black tyrant first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien and barb'rous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?
The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroider'd King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with powers combin'd,
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strew the level green.
Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,

With like confusion diff'rent nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye;
The pierced battalions disunited fall
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.
And now (as oft in some distemper'd state)
On one nice trick depends the gen'ral fate!
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: the King unseen
Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen.
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.
The nymph, exulting, fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate:
Sudden these honours shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide.
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the Fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapors to the Baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah, cease, rash youth! desist ere 't is too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's fate!
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the Lock a thousand sprites repair;
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought:
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired,
Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retired.
The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring forfex wide,
T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain
(But airy substance soon unites again).
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;
Or when rich China vessels, fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!
'Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,'
The Victor cried, 'the glorious prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze:
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!
What Time would spare, from Steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to Fate!
Steel could the labour of the Gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial towers of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder, then, fair Nymph! thy hairs should feel
The conquering force of unresisted steel?'

## CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress,
And secret passions labour'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her mantua's pinn'd awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd hair.
For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew,
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.
Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto shelter'd close from air,
And screen'd in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne; alike in place,
But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature, like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd!
With store of prayers for mornings, nights, and noons,
Her hand is fill'd; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride;
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown for sickness and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.
A constant vapour o'er the palace flies
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful as hermits' dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright as visions of expiring maids:
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires;
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.

Unnumber'd throngs on ev'ry side are seen,
Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.
Here living Teapots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A Pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pie talks;
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works,
And maids turn'd bottles call aloud for corks.
Safe pass'd the Gnome thro' this fantastic band,
A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus address'd the Power — 'Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of Vapours and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is that all your power disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lapdog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease,
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin;
That single act gives half the world the spleen.'
The Goddess, with a discontented air,
Seems to reject him tho' she grants his prayer.
A wondrous Bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A Vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.
The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.
Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling Bag he rent,
And all the Furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
'O wretched maid!' she spread her hands, and cried
(While Hampton's echoes, 'Wretched maid!' replied),
Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with torturing irons wreathed around?
For this with fillets strain'd your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivall'd shrine
Ease, Pleasure, Virtue, all, our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your hapless fame defend?
'T will then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Exposed thro' crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heighten'd by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow,
And Wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lapdogs, parrots, perish all!'
She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs

(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane):
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
And thus broke out — 'My lord, why, what the devil!
Z—ds! damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on 't! 't is past a jest — nay, prithee, pox!
Give her the hair.' — He spoke, and rapp'd his box.
'It grieves me much,' replied the Peer again,
'Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain:
But by this Lock, this sacred Lock, I swear
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipp'd from the lovely head where late it grew),
That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.'
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honours of her head.
But Umbriel, hateful Gnome, forbears not so;
He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half drown'd in tears;
On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,
Which with a sigh she rais'd, and thus she said:
'For ever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to numerous ills betray'd.
O had I rather unadmired remain'd
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!
There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What mov'd my mind with youthful lords to roam?
O had I stay'd, and said my prayers at home;
'T was this the morning omens seem'd to tell,
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tott'ring china shook without a wind;
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A Sylph, too, warn'd me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believ'd too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares.
These, in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.
O hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!'

## CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears;
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido raged in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:
'Say, why are beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why deck'd with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels call'd, and angel-like ador'd?

Why round our coaches crowd the white-glov'd beaux?
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless Good Sense preserve what Beauty gains;
That men may say when we the front-box grace,
"Behold the first in virtue as in face!"
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charm'd the smallpox, or chased old age away;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay, ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since locks will turn to gray;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man must die a maid;
What then remains, but well our power to use,
And keep good humour still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear, good humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.'
So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued;
Belinda frown'd, Thalestris call'd her prude.
'To arms, to arms!' the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confusedly rise,
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like Gods they fight nor dread a mortal wound.

So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms;
Jove's thunder roars, Heav'n trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bell'wing deeps resound:
Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel, on a sconce's height,
Clapp'd his glad wings, and sat to view the fight:
Propp'd on their bodkin-spears, the sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While thro' the press enraged Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A Beau and Witling perish'd in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song:
'O cruel Nymph! a living death I bear,'
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
'Those eyes are made so killing' — was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies
Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.
When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a frown;
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau revived again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes;

Nor fear'd the chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold lord, with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to every atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome reëchoes to his nose.
'Now meet thy fate,' incens'd Belinda cried,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great-great-grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore and now Belinda wears.)
'Boast not my fall,' he cried, 'insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low;
Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames — but burn alive.'
'Restore the Lock!' she cries; and all around
'Restore the Lock!' the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are cross'd,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blest.
So Heav'n decrees! with Heav'n who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.
There heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases,
And beaux' in snuffboxes and tweezer-cases.
There broken vows, and deathbed alms are found,
And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's prayers,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
But trust the Muse — she saw it upward rise,
Tho' mark'd by none but quick poetic eyes
(So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew,
To Proculus alone confess'd in view):
A sudden star, it shot thro' liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The heav'ns bespangling with dishevell'd light.
The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleas'd pursue its progress thro' the skies.
This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray;
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake;
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks thro' Galileo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

# ELOISA TO ABELARD

The origin of this famous poem seems to have lain jointly in Pope's perception of the poetic availability of the Héloïse-Abelard legend, and in his somewhat factitious grief in his separation from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. They met in 1715, became friends, and in 1716 Lady Mary left England. In a letter of June, 1717, Pope commends the poem to her consideration, with a suggestion of the personal applicability of the concluding lines to his own suffering under the existing circumstance of their separation.

## ELOISA TO ABELARD

ARGUMENT

Abelard and Eloisa flourished in the twelfth century; they were two of the most distinguished persons of their age in Learning and Beauty, but for nothing more famous than for their unfortunate passion. After a long course of calamities, they retired each to a several convent, and consecrated the remainder of their days to Religion. It was many years after this separation that a letter of Abelard's to a friend, which contained the history of his misfortune, fell into the hands of Eloisa. This, awakening all her tenderness, occasioned those celebrated letters (out of which the following is partly extracted), which give so lively a picture of the struggles of Grace and Nature, Virtue and Passion.

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-pensive Contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing Melancholy reigns,
What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?
Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?
Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?
Yet, yet I love! — From Abelard it came,
And Eloisa yet must kiss the name.
Dear fatal name! rest ever unreveal'd,
Nor pass these lips, in holy silence seal'd:
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd idea lies:
O write it not, my hand — the name appears
Already written — wash it out, my tears!
In vain lost Eloisa weeps and prays,
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.
Relentless walls! whose darksome round contains
Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains:
Ye rugged rocks, which holy knees have worn;
Ye grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid thorn!
Shrines! where their vigils pale-eyed virgins keep,
And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!
Tho' cold like you, unmov'd and silent grown,
I have not yet forgot myself to stone.
All is not Heav'n's while Abelard has part,
Still rebel Nature holds out half my heart;
Nor prayers nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,
Nor tears, for ages taught to flow in vain.
Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
That well-known name awakens all my woes.
Oh name for ever sad! for ever dear!
Still breathed in sighs, still usher'd with a tear.
I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
Some dire misfortune follows close behind.
Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,
Led thro' a safe variety of woe:
Now warm in love, now with'ring in my bloom,
Lost in a convent's solitary gloom!
There stern religion quench'd th' unwilling flame,
There died the best of passions, Love and Fame.
Yet write, O write me all, that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.
Nor foes nor fortune take this power away;
And is my Abelard less kind than they?
Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare;
Love but demands what else were shed in prayer.
No happier task these faded eyes pursue;
To read and weep is all they now can do.

Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief;
Ah, more than share it, give me all thy grief.
Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires;
The virgin's wish without her fears impart,
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.
Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame,
When Love approach'd me under Friendship's name;
My fancy form'd thee of angelic kind,
Some emanation of th' all-beauteous Mind.
Those smiling eyes, attemp'ring every ray,
Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day,
Guiltless I gazed; Heav'n listen'd while you sung;
And truths divine came mended from that tongue.
From lips like those what precept fail'd to move?
Too soon they taught me 't was no sin to love:
Back thro' the paths of pleasing sense I ran,
Nor wish'd an angel whom I loved a man.
Dim and remote the joys of saints I see;
Nor envy them that Heav'n I lose for thee.
How oft, when press'd to marriage, have I said,
Curse on all laws but those which Love has made!
Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.
Let Wealth, let Honour, wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
Before true passion all those views remove;
Fame, Wealth, and Honour! what are you to Love?
The jealous God, when we profane his fires,
Those restless passions in revenge inspires,
And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
Who seek in love for aught but love alone.
Should at my feet the world's great master fall,
Himself, his throne, his world, I 'd scorn 'em all:
Not Cæsar's empress would I deign to prove;
No, make me mistress to the man I love;
If there be yet another name more free,
More fond than mistress, make me that to thee!
O happy state! when souls each other draw,
When Love is liberty, and Nature law:
All then is full, possessing and possess'd,
No craving void left aching in the breast:
Ev'n thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.
This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be),
And once the lot of Abelard and me.
Alas, how changed! what sudden horrors rise!
A naked lover bound and bleeding lies!
Where, where was Eloise? her voice, her hand,
Her poniard had opposed the dire command.
Barbarian, stay! that bloody stroke restrain;
The crime was common, common be the pain.
I can no more; by shame, by rage suppress'd,
Let tears and burning blushes speak the rest.
Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,
When, warm in youth, I bade the world farewell?
As with cold lips I kiss'd the sacred veil,
The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:
Heav'n scarce believ'd the conquest it survey'd,
And saints with wonder heard the vows I made.
Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew,
Not on the cross my eyes were fix'd, but you:
Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.

Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe;
Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
Still on that breast enamour'd let me lie,
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd;
Give all thou canst — and let me dream the rest.
Ah, no! instruct me other joys to prize,
With other beauties charm my partial eyes!
Full in my view set all the bright abode,
And make my soul quit Abelard for God.
Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy care,
Plants of thy hand, and children of thy prayer.
From the false world in early youth they fled,
By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led.
You raised these hallow'd walls; the desert smil'd,
And Paradise was open'd in the wild.
No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
Our shrines irradiate or emblaze the floors;
No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here bribed the rage of ill-requited Heav'n;
But such plain roofs as piety could raise,
And only vocal with the Maker's praise.
In these lone walls (their day's eternal bound),
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crown'd,
Where awful arches make a noonday night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light,
Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray,
And gleams of glory brighten'd all the day.
But now no face divine contentment wears,
'T is all blank sadness, or continual tears.
See how the force of others' prayers I try,
(O pious fraud of am'rous charity!)
But why should I on others' prayers depend?
Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!
Ah, let thy handmaid, sister, daughter, move,
And all those tender names in one, thy love!
The darksome pines, that o'er yon rocks reclin'd,
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
The wand'ring streams that shine between the hills,
The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze —
No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid:
But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, and a dread repose:
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades every flower, and darkens every green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.
Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!
Death, only Death can break the lasting chain;
And here, ev'n then shall my cold dust remain;
Here all its frailties, all its flames resign,
And wait till 't is no sin to mix with thine.
Ah, wretch! believ'd the spouse of God in vain,
Confess'd within the slave of Love and man.
Assist me, Heav'n! but whence arose that prayer?
Sprung it from piety or from despair?
Ev'n here, where frozen Chastity retires,
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.
I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault;
I view my crime, but kindle at the view,
Repent old pleasures, and solicit new;
Now turn'd to Heav'n, I weep my past offence,
Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'T is sure the hardest science to forget!
How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,
And love th' offender, yet detest th' offence?
How the dear object from the crime remove,
Or how distinguish Penitence from Love?
Unequal task! a passion to resign,
For hearts so touch'd, so pierced, so lost as mine:
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love, how often hate!

How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain — do all things but forget!
But let Heav'n seize it, all at once 't is fired;
Not touch'd, but rapt; not waken'd, but inspired!
O come! O teach me Nature to subdue,
Renounce my love, my life, myself — and You:
Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.
How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot;
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd;
Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;
Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;
Desires composed, affections ever ev'n;
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to Heav'n.
Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whisp'ring angels prompt her golden dreams.
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes;
For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring;
For her white virgins hymeneals sing;
To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day.
Far other dreams my erring soul employ,
Far other raptures of unholy joy.
When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
Fancy restores what vengeance snatch'd away,
Then conscience sleeps, and leaving Nature free,
All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee!
Oh curst, dear horrors of all-conscious night!
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!
Provoking demons all restraint remove,
And stir within me every source of love.
I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,
And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms.
I wake: — no more I hear, no more I view,
The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.
I call aloud; it hears not what I say:
I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.
To dream once more I close my willing eyes;
Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise!
Alas, no more! methinks we wand'ring go
Thro' dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,
Where round some mould'ring tower pale ivy creeps,
And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.
Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies;
Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.
I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,
And wake to all the griefs I left behind.
For thee the Fates, severely kind, ordain
A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain;
Thy life a long dead calm of fix'd repose;
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows.
Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;
Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiv'n,
And mild as opening gleams of promised Heav'n.
Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?
The torch of Venus burns not for the dead.
Nature stands check'd; Religion disapproves;
Ev'n thou art cold — yet Eloisa loves.
Ah, hopeless, lasting flames; like those that burn
To light the dead, and warm th' unfruitful urn!
What scenes appear where'er I turn my view;
The dear ideas, where I fly, pursue;
Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,
Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.
I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God and me:
Thy voice I seem in every hymn to hear,
With every bead I drop too soft a tear.
When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,
And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight:

In seas of flame my plunging soul is drown'd,
While altars blaze, and angels tremble round.
While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,
Kind virtuous drops just gath'ring in my eye,
While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
And dawning grace is opening on my soul:
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!
Oppose thyself to Heav'n; dispute my heart;
Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes
Blot out each bright idea of the skies;
Take back that grace, those sorrows and those tears,
Take back my fruitless penitence and prayers;
Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode:
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!
No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.
Fair eyes, and tempting looks (which yet I view),
Long lov'd, ador'd ideas, all adieu!
O Grace serene! O Virtue heav'nly fair!
Divine Oblivion of low-thoughted care!
Fresh blooming Hope, gay daughter of the sky!
And Faith, our early immortality!
Enter each mild, each amicable guest;
Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!
See in her cell sad Eloisa spread,
Propt on some tomb, a neighbour of the dead.
In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls.
Here, as I watch'd the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound:
'Come, sister, come! (it said, or seem'd to say)
Thy place is here, sad sister, come away;
Once, like thyself, I trembled, wept, and pray'd,
Love's victim then, tho' now a sainted maid:
But all is calm in this eternal sleep;
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep;
Ev'n superstition loses ev'ry fear:
For God, not man, absolves our frailties here.'
I come, I come! prepare your roseate bowers,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flowers.
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow;
Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of day:
See my lips tremble, and my eyeballs roll,
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying soul!
Ah, no — in sacred vestments mayst thou stand,
The hallow'd taper trembling in thy hand,
Present the cross before my lifted eye,
Teach me at once, and learn of me, to die.
Ah then, thy once lov'd Eloisa see!
It will be then no crime to gaze on me.
See from my cheek the transient roses fly!
See the last sparkle languish in my eye!
Till ev'ry motion, pulse, and breath be o'er,
And ev'n my Abelard be lov'd no more.
O Death, all-eloquent! you only prove
What dust we doat on, when 't is man we love.
Then too, when Fate shall thy fair frame destroy
(That cause of all my guilt, and all my joy),
In trance ecstatic may thy pangs be drown'd,
Bright clouds descend, and angels watch thee round;
From opening skies may streaming glories shine,
And saints embrace thee with a love like mine.
May one kind grave unite each hapless name,
And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
When this rebellious heart shall beat no more;

If ever chance two wand'ring lovers brings,
To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
And drink the falling tears each other sheds;
Then sadly say, with mutual pity mov'd,
'O may we never love as these have lov'd!'
From the full choir, when loud hosannas rise,
And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,
Amid that scene if some relenting eye
Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,
Devotion's self shall steal a thought from Heav'n,
One human tear shall drop, and be forgiv'n.
And sure if Fate some future bard shall join
In sad similitude of griefs to mine,
Condemn'd whole years in absence to deplore,
And image charms he must behold no more, —
Such if there be, who loves so long, so well,
Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost;
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.

# SATIRES

[The *Satires* appeared between 1733 and 1738.]

## EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

### BEING THE PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES

#### ADVERTISEMENT

This paper is a sort of bill of complaint, begun many years since, and drawn up by snatches, as the several occasions offered. I had no thoughts of publishing it, till it pleased some Persons of Rank and Fortune (the authors of 'Verses to the Imitator of Horace,' and of an 'Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton Court') to attack, in a very extraordinary manner, not only my Writings (of which, being public, the Public is judge), but my Person, Morals, and Family; whereof, to those who know me not, a truer information may be requisite. Being divided between the necessity to say something of myself, and my own laziness to undertake so awkward a task, I thought it the shortest way to put the last hand to this epistle. If it have any thing pleasing, it will be that by which I am most desirous to please, the Truth and the Sentiment; and if any thing offensive, it will be only to those I am least sorry to offend, the vicious or the ungenerous.

Many will know their own pictures in it, there being not a circumstance but what is true; but I have, for the most part, spared their names, and they may escape being laughed at if they please.

I would have some of them know it was owing to the request of the learned and candid Friend to whom it is inscribed, that I make not as free use of theirs as they have done of mine. However, I shall have this advantage and honour on my side, that whereas, by their proceeding, any abuse may be directed at any man, no injury can possibly be done by mine, since a nameless character can never be found out but by its truth and likeness.

*P.* 'SHUT, shut the door, good John!' fatigued, I said;
'Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.'
The Dog-star rages! nay, 't is past a doubt
All Bedlam or Parnassus is let out:
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thickets, thro' my grot they glide,
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the church is free,
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:
Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,
Happy to catch me just at dinner time.
Is there a Parson much bemused in beer,
A maudlin Poetess, a rhyming Peer,
A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a stanza when he should engross?

Is there who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
All fly to TWIT'NAM, and in humble strain
Apply to me to keep them mad or vain,
Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:
Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses Wit and Poetry, and Pope.
Friend to my life (which did not you prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song)!
What Drop or Nostrum can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love?
A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped;
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
Seiz'd and tied down to judge, how wretched I!
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie.
To laugh were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave exceeds all power of face.
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish and an aching head,
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, 'Keep your piece nine years.'
'Nine years!' cries he, who, high in Drury lane,
Lull'd by soft zephyrs thro' the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term ends,
Obliged by hunger and request of friends:
'The piece, you think, is incorrect? why, take it!
I'm all submission: what you'd have it — make it.'
Three things another's modest wishes bound,
'My friendship, and a Prologue, and ten pound.'
Pitholeon sends to me: 'You know his Grace,
I want a patron; ask him for a place.'
Pitholeon libell'd me — 'But here's a letter
Informs you, Sir, 'twas when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? Curll invites to dine,
He'll write a *Journal*, or he'll turn Divine.'
Bless me! a packet. — 'T is a stranger sues,
A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse.
If I dislike it, 'Furies, death, and rage!'
If I approve, 'Commend it to the stage.'
There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,
The players and I are, luckily, no friends.
Fired that the house rejects him, ''Sdeath, I'll print it,
And shame the fools — your int'rest, Sir, with Lintot.'
Lintot, dull rogue, will think your price too much:
'Not, Sir, if you revise it and retouch.'
All my demurs but double his attacks;
At last he whispers, 'Do, and we go snacks.'
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door;
'Sir, let me see your works and you no more.'
'Tis sung, when Midas' ears began to spring
(Midas, a sacred person and a king),
His very Minister who spied them first
(Some say his Queen) was forc'd to speak or burst.
And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?
*A.* Good friend, forbear! you deal in dangerous things;
I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or Kings;
Keep close to ears, and those let asses prick,
'T is nothing — *P.* Nothing! if they bite and kick?
Out with it, DUNCIAD! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he 's an ass:
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)
The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.
You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, Codrus! round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack:
Pit, Box, and Gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.
Who shames a Scribbler? break one cobweb thro',
He spins the slight self-pleasing thread anew:

Destroy his fib, or sophistry — in vain!
The creature 's at his dirty work again,
Throned in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines.
Whom have I hurt? has Poet yet or Peer
Lost the arch'd eyebrow or Parnassian sneer?
And has not Colley still his lord and whore?
His butchers Henley? his freemasons Moore?
Does not one table Bavius still admit?
Still to one Bishop Philips seem a wit?
Still Sappho — *A.* Hold! for God's sake — you'll offend.
No names — be calm — learn prudence of a friend.
I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
But foes like these — *P.* One flatt'rer's worse than all.
Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right,
It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.
A fool quite angry is quite innocent:
Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they repent.
One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes;
One from all Grub-street will my fame defend,
And, more abusive, calls himself my friend:
This prints my *Letters*, that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, 'Subscribe, subscribe!'
There are who to my person pay their court:
I cough like Horace; and tho' lean, am short;
Ammon's great son one shoulder had too high,
Such Ovid's nose, and 'Sir! you have an eye —'
Go on, obliging creatures! make me see
All that disgraced my betters met in me.
Say, for my comfort, languishing in bed,
'Just so immortal Maro held his head:'
And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer died three thousand years ago.
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipp'd me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came:
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd:
The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me thro' this long disease my life,
To second, ARBUTHNOT! thy art and care,
And teach the being you preserv'd, to bear.
*A.* But why then publish? *P.* Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endured my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, read;
Ev'n mitred Rochester would nod the head,
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
With open arms receiv'd one poet more.
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cookes.
Soft were my numbers; who could take offence
While pure description held the place of sense?
Like gentle Fanny's was my flowery theme,
'A painted mistress, or a purling stream.'
Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill;
I wish'd the man a dinner, and sat still:
Yet then did Dennis rave in furious fret;
I never answer'd; I was not in debt.
If want provoked, or madness made them print,
I waged no war with Bedlam or the Mint.
Did some more sober critic come abroad;
If wrong, I smiled, if right, I kiss'd the rod.
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel graced these ribalds,
From slashing Bentleys down to piddling Tibbalds.
Each wight who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each word-catcher that lives on syllables,

Ev'n such small critics some regard may claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakspeare's name.
Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.
Were others angry: I excused them too;
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.
A man's true merit 't is not hard to find;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That casting-weight Pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify? for who can guess?
The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half-a-crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a year;
He who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left;
And he who now to sense, now nonsense, leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning:
And he whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad:
All these my modest satire bade translate,
And own'd that nine such poets made a Tate.
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!
And swear not ADDISON himself was safe.
Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,
Bless'd with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne;
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserv'd to blame or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools; by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause:
While Wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?
What tho' my name stood rubric on the walls,
Or plaster'd posts, with claps, in capitals?
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers load,
On wings of wind came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the race that write;
I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their sight:
Poems I heeded (now berhymed so long)
No more than thou, great George! a birth-day song.
I ne'er with Wits or Witlings pass'd my days
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;
Nor like a puppy daggled thro' the town
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;
Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cried,
With handkerchief and orange at my side;
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,
To Bufo left the whole Castalian state.
Proud as Apollo on his forked hill
Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill:
Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
His library (where busts of poets dead,
And a true Pindar stood without a head)
Receiv'd of Wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,
And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:
Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise;

To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh;
Dryden alone escaped this judging eye:
But still the great have kindness in reserve;
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.
May some choice patron bless each gray goose quill!
May every Bavius have his Bufo still!
So when a statesman wants a day's defence,
Or Envy holds a whole week's war with Sense,
Or simple Pride for flatt'ry makes demands,
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!
Bless'd be the great! for those they take away,
And those they left me — for they left me Gay;
Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My Verse, and Queensb'ry weeping o'er thy urn!
Oh let me live my own, and die so too
(To live and die is all I have to do)!
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please;
Above a Patron, tho' I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my Friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead.
Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light?
Heav'ns! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
'I found him close with Swift' — 'Indeed? no doubt
(Cries prating Balbus) something will come out.'
'T is all in vain, deny it as I will;
'No, such a genius never can lie still:'
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first lampoon Sir Will or Bubo makes.
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,
When ev'ry coxcomb knows me by my style?
Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fall'n Worth, or Beauty in distress,
Who loves a lie, lame Slander helps about,
Who writes a libel, or who copies out;
That fop whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame;
Who can your merit selfishly approve,
And show the sense of it without the love;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour, injured, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray;
Who to the Dean and Silver Bell can swear,
And sees at Canons what was never there;
Who reads but with a lust to misapply,
Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie:
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.
Let Sporus tremble — *A.* What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
*P.* Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet Wit ne'er tastes, and Beauty ne'er enjoys;
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way,
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,

Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;
His wit all see-saw between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, Parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and Pride that licks the dust.
Not Fortune's worshipper, nor Fashion's fool,
Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool,
Not proud nor servile; — be one poet's praise,
That if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways:
That flatt'ry ev'n to Kings, he held a shame,
And thought a lie in verse or prose the same;
That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth, and moralized his song;
That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;
The tale revived, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash and dulness not his own;
The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape,
The libell'd person, and the pictured shape;
Abuse on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father dead;
The whisper, that, to greatness still too near,
Perhaps yet vibrates on his SOV'REIGN'S ear —
Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past:
For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the last!
*A.* But why insult the poor? affront the great?
*P.* A knave 's a knave to me in ev'ry state;
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at court, or Japhet in a jail;
A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire;
If on a Pillory, or near a Throne,
He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.
Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:
This dreaded Satirist Dennis will confess
Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress:
So humble, he has knock'd at Tibbald's door,
Has drunk with Cibber, nay, has rhymed for Moore.
Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's lie.
To please a mistress one aspers'd his life;
He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife:
Let Budgell charge low Grub-street on his quill,
And write whate'er he pleased, except his will;
Let the two Curlls of town and court abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and muse:
Yet why? that father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbour fool;
That harmless mother thought no wife a whore:
Hear this, and spare his family, James Moore!
Unspotted names, and memorable long,
If there be force in Virtue, or in Song.
Of gentle blood (part shed in honour's cause,
While yet in Britain honour had applause)
Each parent sprung — *A.* What fortune, pray? —
*P.* Their own;
And better got than Bestia's from the throne.
Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious thro' his age.

No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dared an oath, nor hazarded a lie.
Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
No language but the language of the heart.
By Nature honest, by Experience wise,
Healthy by Temp'rance and by Exercise;
His life, tho' long, to sickness pass'd unknown,
His death was instant and without a groan.
O grant me thus to live, and thus to die!
Who sprung from kings shall know less joy than I.
O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage
To rock the cradle of reposing Age,
With lenient arts extend a Mother's breath,
Make Languor smile, and smooth the bed of Death;
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep a while one parent from the sky!
On cares like these if length of days attend,
May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend!
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a Queen.
*A.* Whether that blessing be denied or giv'n,
Thus far was right; — the rest belongs to Heav'n.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF THE SECOND BOOK OF HORACE

The identification of Augustus with George II. makes it necessary to take much of this poem ironically. George II., since his accession ten years before this was written (1737), had shown absolute indifference to the literature of England. The critical portions of the satire undoubtedly present Pope's real judgment of contemporary literature.

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The reflections of Horace, and the judgments passed in his Epistle to Augustus, seemed so seasonable to the present times, that I could not help applying them to the use of my own country. The author thought them considerable enough to address them to his prince, whom he paints with all the great and good qualities of a monarch upon whom the Romans depended for the increase of an absolute Empire; but to make the poem entirely English, I was willing to add one or two of those which contribute to the happiness of a Free People, and are more consistent with the welfare of our neighbours.

This epistle will show the learned world to have fallen into two mistakes: one, that Augustus was a Patron of poets in general; whereas he not only prohibited all but the best writers to name him, but recommended that care even to the civil magistrate; *Admonebat prætores, ne paterentur nomen suum obsolefieri*, &c.; the other, that this piece was only a general Discourse of Poetry; whereas it was an Apology for the Poets, in order to render Augustus more their patron. Horace here pleads the cause of his contemporaries; first, against the Taste of the town, whose humour it was to magnify the authors of the preceding age; secondly, against the Court and Nobility, who encouraged only the writers for the Theatre; and, lastly, against the Emperor himself, who had conceived them of little use to the Government. He shows (by a view of the progress of Learning, and the change of Taste among the Romans) that the introduction of the Polite Arts of Greece had given the writers of his time great advantages over their predecessors; that their Morals were much improved, and the license of those ancient poets restrained; that Satire and Comedy were become more just and useful; that whatever extravagancies were left on the stage were owing to the ill taste of the nobility; that poets, under due regulations, were in many respects useful to the State; and concludes, that it was upon them the Emperor himself must depend for his Fame with posterity.

We may further learn from this Epistle, that Horace made his court to this great Prince, by writing with a decent freedom toward him, with a just contempt of his low flatterers, and with a manly regard to his own character.

TO AUGUSTUS

While you, great Patron of Mankind! sustain
The balanced world, and open all the main;
Your country, chief, in Arms abroad defend,
At home with Morals, Arts, and Laws amend;
How shall the Muse, from such a monarch, steal
An hour, and not defraud the public weal?
Edward and Henry, now the boast of Fame,
And virtuous Alfred, a more sacred name,
After a life of gen'rous toils endured, —
The Gaul subdued, or property secured,
Ambition humbled, mighty cities storm'd,
Or laws establish'd, and the world reform'd —

Closed their long glories with a sigh, to find
Th' unwilling gratitude of base Mankind!
All human Virtue, to its latest breath,
Finds Envy never conquer'd but by Death.
The great Alcides, ev'ry labour past,
Had still this monster to subdue at last:
Sure fate of all, beneath whose rising ray
Each star of meaner merit fades away!
Oppress'd we feel the beam directly beat;
Those suns of glory please not till they set.
To thee the World its present homage pays,
The harvest early, but mature the praise:
Great friend of Liberty! in Kings a name
Above all Greek, above all Roman fame;
Whose word is truth, as sacred and revered
As Heav'n's own oracles from altars heard.
Wonder of Kings! like whom to mortal eyes
None e'er has risen, and none e'er shall rise.
Just in one instance, be it yet confest
Your people, sir, are partial in the rest;
Foes to all living worth except your own,
And advocates for folly dead and gone.
Authors, like coins, grow dear as they grow old;
It is the Rust we value, not the Gold.
Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learn'd by rote,
And beastly Skelton heads of houses quote;
One likes no language but the Faery Queen;
A Scot will fight for Christ's Kirk o' the Green;
And each true Briton is to Ben so civil,
He swears the Muses met him at the Devil.
Tho' justly Greece her eldest sons admires,
Why should not we be wiser than our sires?
In every public virtue we excel,
We build, we paint, we sing, we dance, as well;
And learned Athens to our art must stoop,
Could she behold us tumbling thro' a hoop.
If time improve our Wit as well as Wine,
Say at what age a poet grows divine?
Shall we, or shall we not, account him so
Who died, perhaps, a hundred years ago?
End all dispute; and fix the year precise
When British bards begin t' immortalize?
'Who lasts a century can have no flaw;
I hold that Wit a classic, good in law.'
Suppose he wants a year, will you compound?
And shall we deem him ancient, right, and sound,
Or damn to all eternity at once
At ninety-nine a modern and a dunce?
'We shall not quarrel for a year or two;
By courtesy of England he may do.'
Then by the rule that made the horsetail bare,
I pluck out year by year, as hair by hair,
And melt down Ancients like a heap of snow,
While you, to measure merits, look in Stowe,
And estimating authors by the year,
Bestow a garland only on a bier.
Shakespeare (whom you and every playhouse bill
Style the divine! the matchless! what you will)
For Gain, not Glory, wing'd his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.
Ben, old and poor, as little seem'd to heed
The life to come in every poet's creed.
Who now reads Cowley? if he pleases yet,
His Moral pleases, not his pointed Wit:
Forgot his Epic, nay, Pindaric art,
But still I love the language of his heart.
'Yet surely, surely these were famous men!
What boy but hears the sayings of old Ben?
In all debates where Critics bear a part,
Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson's Art,
Of Shakespeare's Nature, and of Cowley's Wit;
How Beaumont's judgment check'd what Fletcher writ;
How Shadwell hasty, Wycherley was slow;
But for the passions, Southern sure, and Rowe!
These, only these, support the crowded stage,
From eldest Heywood down to Cibber's age.'
All this may be; the People's voice is odd;
It is, and it is not, the voice of God.
To Gammer Gurton if it give the bays,
And yet deny the Careless Husband praise,
Or say our fathers never broke a rule;
Why then, I say, the Public is a fool.
But let them own that greater faults than we
They had, and greater virtues, I 'll agree.
Spenser himself affects the obsolete,
And Sidney's verse halts ill on Roman feet;

Milton's strong pinion now not Heav'n can bound,
Now, serpent-like, in prose he sweeps the ground.
In quibbles Angel and Archangel join,
And God the Father turns a School-divine.
Not that I 'd lop the beauties from his book,
Like slashing Bentley with his desp'rate hook;
Or damn all Shakespeare, like th' affected fool
At Court, who hates whate'er he read at School.
But for the Wits of either Charles's days,
The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease;
Sprat, Carew, Sedley, and a hundred more
(Like twinkling stars the Miscellanies o'er),
One simile that solitary shines
In the dry Desert of a thousand lines,
Or lengthen'd thought, that gleams thro' many a page,
Has sanctified whole poems for an age.
I lose my patience, and I own it too,
When works are censured not as bad, but new;
While, if our elders break all Reason's laws,
These fools demand not pardon, but applause.
On Avon's bank, where flowers eternal blow,
If I but ask if any weed can grow,
One tragic sentence if I dare deride,
Which Betterton's grave action dignified,
Or well-mouth'd Booth with emphasis proclaims,
(Tho' but perhaps a muster-roll of names),
How will our fathers rise up in a rage,
And swear all shame is lost in GEORGE'S age!
You 'd think no fools disgraced the former reign,
Did not some grave examples yet remain,
Who scorn a lad should teach his father skill,
And having once been wrong, will be so still.
He who, to seem more deep than you or I,
Extols old bards, or Merlin's prophecy,
Mistake him not; he envies, not admires,
And to debase the sons exalts the sires.
Had ancient times conspired to disallow
What then was new, what had been ancient now?
Or what remain'd, so worthy to be read
By learned critics of the mighty dead?
In days of ease, when now the weary sword
Was sheath'd, and luxury with Charles restor'd,
In every taste of foreign courts improv'd,
'All by the King's example liv'd and lov'd,'
Then peers grew proud in horsemanship t' excel;
Newmarket's glory rose, as Britain's fell;
The soldier breathed the gallantries of France,
And ev'ry flowery Courtier writ Romance.
Then marble, soften'd into life, grew warm,
And yielding metal flow'd to human form;
Lely on animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye, that spoke the melting soul.
No wonder then, when all was love and sport,
The willing Muses were debauch'd at court;
On each enervate string they taught the note
To pant, or tremble thro' a Eunuch's throat.
But Britain, changeful as a child at play,
Now calls in princes, and now turns away.
Now Whig, now Tory, what we loved we hate;
Now all for Pleasure, now for Church and State;
Now for Prerogatives, and now for laws;
Effects unhappy, from a noble cause.
Time was, a sober Englishman would knock
His servants up, and rise by five o'clock;
Instruct his family in ev'ry rule,
And send his wife to church, his son to school.
To worship like his fathers was his care;
To teach their frugal virtues to his heir;
To prove that Luxury could never hold,
And place on good security his gold.
Now times are changed, and one poetic itch
Has seized the Court and City, Poor and Rich;
Sons, sires, and grandsires, all will wear the bays;
Our wives read Milton, and our daughters plays;
To theatres and to rehearsals throng,
And all our grace at table is a song.
I, who so oft renounce the Muses, lie:
Not **'s self e'er tells more fibs than I.

When sick of Muse, our follies we deplore,
And promise our best friends to rhyme no more,
We wake next morning in a raging fit,
And call for pen and ink to show our wit.
He served a 'prenticeship who sets up shop;
Ward tried on puppies and the poor his drop;
Ev'n Radcliff's doctors travel first to France,
Nor dare to practise till they 've learn'd to dance.
Who builds a bridge that never drove a pile?
(Should Ripley venture, all the world would smile),
But those who cannot write, and those who can,
All rhyme, and scrawl, and scribble, to a man.
Yet, Sir, reflect; the mischief is not great;
These madmen never hurt the Church or State:
Sometimes the folly benefits mankind,
And rarely av'rice taints the tuneful mind.
Allow him but his plaything of a Pen,
He ne'er rebels, or plots, like other men:
Flight of cashiers, or mobs, he 'll never mind,
And knows no losses while the Muse is kind.
To cheat a friend or ward, he leaves to Peter;
The good man heaps up nothing but mere metre,
Enjoys his Garden and his Book in quiet;
And then — a perfect hermit in his diet.
Of little use the man you may suppose
Who says in verse what others say in prose;
Yet let me show a Poet 's of some eight,
And (tho' no soldier) useful to the State.
What will a child learn sooner than a song?
What better teach a foreigner the tongue —
What 's long or short, each accent where to place,
And speak in public with some sort of grace?
I scarce can think him such a worthless thing,
Unless he praise some monster of a King;
Or virtue or religion turn to sport,
To please a lewd or unbelieving Court.

Unhappy Dryden! — In all Charles's days
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays;
And in our own (excuse some courtly stains)
No whiter page than Addison remains.
He from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,
And sets the passions on the side of Truth,
Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest Art,
And pours each human virtue in the heart.
Let Ireland tell how wit upheld her cause,
Her trade supported, and supplied her laws;
And leave on Swift this grateful verse engraved,
'The rights a Court attack'd, a Poet saved.'
Behold the hand that wrought a Nation's cure,
Stretch'd to relieve the idiot and the poor;
Proud vice to brand, or injured worth adorn,
And stretch the ray to ages yet unborn.
Not but there are, who merit other palms;
Hopkins and Sternhold glad the heart with psalms;
The boys and girls whom charity maintains
Implore your help in these pathetic strains:
How could Devotion touch the country pews
Unless the Gods bestow'd a proper Muse?
Verse cheers their leisure, verse assists their work,
Verse prays for peace, or sings down pope and Turk.
The silenced preacher yields to potent strain,
And feels that Grace his prayer besought in vain;
The blessing thrills thro' all the lab'ring throng,
And Heav'n is won by violence of song.
Our rural ancestors, with little blest,
Patient of labour when the end was rest,
Indulged the day that housed their annual grain
With feasts, and off'rings, and a thankful strain.
The joy their wives, their sons, and servants share,
Ease of their toil, and partners of their care:
The Laugh, the Jest, attendants on the bowl,
Smooth'd ev'ry brow, and open'd ev'ry soul:

With growing years the pleasing license grew,
And taunts alternate innocently flew.
But Times corrupt, and Nature, ill inclin'd,
Produced the point that left a sting behind;
Till friend with friend, and families at strife,
Triumphant malice raged thro' private life.
Who felt the wrong, or fear'd it, took th' alarm,
Appeal'd to law, and Justice lent her arm.
At length by wholesome dread of statutes bound,
The poets learn'd to please, and not to wound:
Most warp'd to Flatt'ry's side; but some, more nice,
Preserv'd the freedom, and forbore the vice.
Hence Satire rose, that just the medium hit,
And heals with morals what it hurts with wit.
We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms,
Her arts victorious triumph'd o'er our arms;
Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
Wit grew polite, and numbers learn'd to flow.
Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine:
Tho' still some traces of our rustic vein
And splay-foot verse remain'd, and will remain.
Late, very late, correctness grew our care,
When the tired nation breathed from civil war.
Exact Racine and Corneille's noble fire
Show'd us that France had something to admire.
Not but the tragic spirit was our own,
And full in Shakespeare, fair in Otway, shone;
But Otway fail'd to polish or refine,
And fluent Shakespeare scarce effaced a line.
Ev'n copious Dryden wanted, or forgot.
The last and greatest art — the art to blot.
Some doubt if equal pains or equal fire
The humbler Muse of Comedy require.
But in known images of life I guess
The labour greater, as th' indulgence less.
Observe how seldom ev'n the best succeed:
Tell me if Congreve's fools are fools indeed?
What pert low dialogue has Farquhar writ!
How Van wants grace, who never wanted wit:
The stage how loosely does Astrea tread,
Who fairly puts all characters to bed!
And idle Cibber, how he breaks the laws,
To make poor Pinkey eat with vast applause!
But fill their purse, our poet's work is done,
Alike to them by pathos or by pun.
O you! whom Vanity's light bark conveys
On Fame's mad voyage by the wind of praise,
With what a shifting gale your course you ply,
For ever sunk too low, or borne too high.
Who pants for glory finds but short repose;
A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows.
Farewell the Stage! if just as thrives the play
The silly bard grows fat or falls away.
There still remains, to mortify a Wit,
The many-headed monster of the pit;
A senseless, worthless, and unhonour'd crowd,
Who, to disturb their betters, mighty proud,
Clatt'ring their sticks before ten lines are spoke,
Call for the Farce, the Bear, or the Blackjoke.
What dear delight to Britons farce affords!
Ever the taste of Mobs, but now of Lords:
(Taste! that eternal wanderer, which flies
From heads to ears, and now from ears to eyes)
The play stands still; damn action and discourse!
Back fly the scenes, and enter foot and horse;
Pageants on pageants, in long order drawn,
Peers, heralds, bishops, ermine, gold, and lawn;
The Champion too! and, to complete the jest,
Old Edward's armour beams on Cibber's breast.

With laughter sure Democritus had died,
Had he beheld an audience gape so wide.
Let bear or elephant be e'er so white,
The people sure, the people are the sight!
Ah, luckless Poet! stretch thy lungs and roar,
That bear or elephant shall heed thee more;
While all its throats the gallery extends,
And all the thunder of the pit ascends!
Loud as the wolves on Orcas' stormy steep
Howl to the roarings of the northern deep,
Such is the shout, the long applauding note,
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat;
Or when from court a birthday suit bestow'd,
Sinks the lost actor in the tawdry load.
Booth enters — hark! the universal peal!
'But has he spoken?' — Not a syllable.
'What shook the stage, and made the people stare?'
Cato's long wig, flower'd gown, and lacker'd chair.
Yes, lest you think I rally more than teach,
Or praise malignly arts I cannot reach,
Let me for once presume t' instruct the times,
To know the Poet from the man of rhymes:
'T is he who gives my breast a thousand pains,
Can make me feel each passion that he feigns,
Enrage, compose, with more than magic art,
With pity and with terror tear my heart,
And snatch me o'er the earth, or thro' the air,
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and where.
But not this part of the poetic state
Alone deserves the favour of the great.
Think of those authors, Sir, who would rely
More on a reader's sense than gazer's eye.
Or who shall wander where the Muses sing?
Who climb their mountain, or who taste their spring?
How shall we fill a library with Wit,
When Merlin's Cave is half unfurnish'd yet?
My liege! why writers little claim your thought
I guess, and, with their leave, will tell the fault.

We Poets are (upon a poet's word)
Of all mankind the creatures most absurd:
The season when to come, and when to go,
To sing, or cease to sing, we never know;
And if we will recite nine hours in ten,
You lose your patience just like other men.
Then, too, we hurt ourselves when, to defend
A single verse, we quarrel with a friend;
Repeat, unask'd; lament, the wit's too fine
For vulgar eyes, and point out every line:
But most when straining with too weak a wing
We needs will write epistles to the King;
And from the moment we oblige the town,
Expect a Place or Pension from the Crown;
Or dubb'd historians by express command,
T' enrol your triumphs o'er the seas and land,
Be call'd to Court to plan some work divine,
As once for Louis, Boileau and Racine.
Yet think, great Sir! (so many virtues shown)
Ah! think what poet best may make them known;
Or choose at least some minister of grace,
Fit to bestow the Laureate's weighty place.
Charles, to late times to be transmitted fair,
Assign'd his figure to Bernini's care;
And great Nassau to Kneller's hand decreed
To fix him graceful on the bounding steed:
So well in paint and stone they judg'd of merit;
But Kings in Wit may want discerning spirit.
The hero William, and the martyr Charles,
One knighted Blackmore, and one pension'd Quarles,
Which made old Ben and surly Dennis swear
'No Lord's anointed, but a Russian bear.'
Not with such majesty, such bold relief,
The forms august of King, or conquering Chief,
E'er swell'd on marble, as in verse have shined
(In polish'd verse) the manners and the mind.
O! could I mount on the Mæonian wing,
Your arms, your actions, your repose, to sing!

What seas you travers'd, and what fields you fought!
Your country's peace how oft, how dearly bought!
How barb'rous rage subsided at your word,
And nations wonder'd while they dropp'd the sword!
How, when you nodded, o'er the land and deep,
Peace stole her wing, and wrapt the world in sleep,
Till earth's extremes your mediation own,
And Asia's tyrants tremble at your throne!
But verse, alas! your Majesty disdains;
And I 'm not used to panegyric strains.
The zeal of fools offends at any time,
But most of all the zeal of fools in rhyme.
Besides, a Fate attends on all I write,
That when I aim at praise they say I bite.
A vile encomium doubly ridicules:
There 's nothing blackens like the ink of fools.
If true, a woful likeness; and, if lies,
'Praise undeserv'd is scandal in disguise.'
Well may he blush who gives it, or receives;
And when I flatter, let my dirty leaves
(Like Journals, Odes, and such forgotten things,
As Eusden, Philips, Settle, writ of Kings)
Clothe spice, line trunk, or, flutt'ring in a row,
Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Soho.

# WILLIAM COLLINS

## ODE TO SIMPLICITY

[Publ. 1747]

O thou, by Nature taught,
To breathe her genuine thought,
In numbers warmly pure, and sweetly strong;
Who first, on mountains wild,
In Fancy, loveliest child,
Thy babe, or Pleasure's, nursed the powers of song!

Thou, who, with hermit heart,
Disdain'st the wealth of art,
And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trailing pall;
But comest a decent maid,
In attic robe array'd,
O chaste, unboastful Nymph, to thee I call!

By all the honey'd store
On Hybla's thymy shore;
By all her blooms, and mingled murmurs dear;
By her[1] whose lovelorn woe,
In evening musings slow,
Soothed sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear:

By old Cephisus deep,
Who spread his wavy sweep,
In warbled wanderings, round thy green retreat;
On whose enamel'd side,
When holy Freedom died,
No equal haunt allured thy future feet.

O sister meek of Truth,
To my admiring youth,
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse!
The flowers that sweetest breathe,
Though Beauty cull'd the wreath,
Still ask thy hand to range their order'd hues.

While Rome could none esteem
But virtue's patriot theme,
You loved her hills, and led her laureat band:
But staid to sing alone
To one distinguish'd throne;
And turn'd thy face, and fled her alter'd land.

No more, in hall or bower,
The Passions own thy power;
Love, only Love her forceless numbers mean:
For thou hast left her shrine;
Nor olive more, nor vine,
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

Though taste, though genius, bless
To some divine excess,
Faints the cold work till thou inspire the whole;
What each, what all supply,
May court, may charm, our eye;
Thou, only thou, canst raise the meeting soul!

Of these let others ask,
To aid some mighty task,
I only seek to find thy temperate vale;
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature, learn my tale.

[1] The ἀηδὼν, or nightingale.

## ODE

### WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1746

[Publ. 1747]

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes bless'd!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall a while repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

## ODE TO LIBERTY

[Publ. 1747]

### STROPHE

WHO shall awake the Spartan fife,
And call in solemn sounds to life,
The youths, whose locks divinely spreading,
Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue,
At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,
Applauding Freedom loved of old to view?
What new Alcæus, fancy-blest,
Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,
At Wisdom's shrine awhile its flame concealing,
(What place so fit to seal a deed renown'd?)
Till she her brightest lightnings round revealing,
It leap'd in glory forth, and dealt her prompted wound!
O goddess, in that feeling hour,
When most its sounds would court thy ears,
Let not my shell's misguided power
E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful tears.
No, Freedom, no, I will not tell
How Rome, before thy weeping face,
With heaviest sound, a giant-statue, fell,
Push'd by a wild and artless race
From off its wide ambitious base,
When Time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
And all the blended work of strength and grace,
With many a rude repeated stroke,
And many a barbarous yell, to thousand fragments broke.

### EPODE

Yet, even where'er the least appear'd,
The admiring world thy hand revered;
Still 'midst the scatter'd states around,
Some remnants of her strength were found;
They saw, by what escaped the storm,
How wondrous rose her perfect form;
How in the great, the labour'd whole,
Each mighty master pour'd his soul!
For sunny Florence, seat of art,
Beneath her vines preserved a part,
Till they,[1] whom Science loved to name,
(O who could fear it?) quench'd her flame.
And lo, an humbler relic laid
In jealous Pisa's olive shade!
See small Marino[2] joins the theme
Though least, not last in thy esteem:

[1] The Medici. [2] San Marino.

Strike, louder strike the ennobling strings
To those,[1] whose merchant sons were kings;
To him,[2] who, deck'd with pearly pride,
In Adria weds his green-hair'd bride;
Hail, port of glory, wealth, and pleasure,
Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure:
Nor e'er her former pride relate,
To sad Liguria's[3] bleeding state.
Ah no! more pleased thy haunts I seek,
On wild Helvetia's[4] mountains bleak:
(Where, when the favour'd of thy choice,
The daring archer heard thy voice;
Forth from his eyrie roused in dread,
The ravening eagle northward fled):
Or dwell in willow'd meads more near,
With those to whom thy stork is dear:
Those whom the rod of Alva bruised,
Whose crown a British queen refused!
The magic works, thou feel'st the strains,
One holier name alone remains;
The perfect spell shall then avail,
Hail, nymph, adored by Britain, hail!

### ANTISTROPHE

Beyond the measure vast of thought,
The works the wizard Time has wrought!
The Gaul, 'tis held of antique story,
Saw Britain linked to his now adverse strand,
No sea between, nor cliff sublime and hoary,
He pass'd with unwet feet through all our land.
To the blown Baltic then, they say,
The wild waves found another way,
Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains rounding;
Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise.
A wide wild storm even nature's self confounding,
Withering her giant sons with strange uncouth surprise.
This pillar'd earth so firm and wide,
By winds and inward labours torn,
In thunders dread was push'd aside,
And down the shouldering billows borne.
And see, like gems, her laughing train,
The little isles on every side,
Mona, once hid from those who search the main,
Where thousand elfin shapes abide,
And Wight who checks the westering tide,
For thee consenting heaven has each bestow'd,
A fair attendant on her sovereign pride:

[1] The Venetians. [2] The Doge of Venice.
[3] Genoa. [4] Switzerland.

To thee this blest divorce she owed,
For thou hast made her vales thy loved, thy last abode!

SECOND EPODE

Then too, 'tis said, an hoary pile,
'Midst the green navel of our isle,
Thy shrine in some religious wood,
O soul-enforcing goddess, stood!
There oft the painted native's feet
Were wont thy form celestial meet:
Though now with hopeless toil we trace
Time's backward rolls, to find its place;
Whether the fiery-tressed Dane,
Or Roman's self o'erturn'd the fane,
Or in what heaven-left age it fell,
'Twere hard for modern song to tell.
Yet still, if Truth those beams infuse,
Which guide at once, and charm the Muse,
Beyond yon braided clouds that lie,
Paving the light embroider'd sky,
Amidst the bright pavilion'd plains,
The beauteous model still remains.
There, happier than in islands blest,
Or bowers by spring or Hebe drest,
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,
In warlike weeds, retired in glory,
Here their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to the immortal string.
How may the poet now unfold
What never tongue or numbers told?
How learn delighted, and amazed,
What hands unknown that fabric raised?
Even now before his favour'd eyes,
In gothic pride, it seems to rise!
Yet Græcia's graceful orders join,
Majestic through the mix'd design:
The secret builder knew to choose
Each sphere-found gem of richest hues
Whate'er heaven's purer mould contains,
When nearer suns emblaze its veins
There on the walls the patriot's sight
May ever hang with fresh delight,
And, graved with some prophetic rage,
Read Albion's fame through every age.
Ye forms divine, ye laureat band,
That near her inmost altar stand!
Now soothe her to her blissful train
Blithe Concord's social form to gain:
Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep
Even Anger's bloodshot eyes in sleep;
Before whose breathing bosom's balm
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm:
Her let our sires and matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravaged shore;
Our youths, enamour'd of the fair,
Play with the tangles of her hair,
Till, in one loud applauding sound,
The nations shout to her around,
O how supremely art thou blest,
Thou, lady — thou shalt rule the west!

## ODE TO A LADY

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL ROSS, IN THE ACTION OF FONTENOY. WRITTEN IN MAY, 1745

[Publ. 1747]

While, lost to all his former mirth,
Britannia's genius bends to earth,
And mourns the fatal day:
While stain'd with blood he strives to tear
Unseemly from his sea-green hair
The wreaths of cheerful May:

The thoughts which musing Pity pays,
And fond Remembrance loves to raise,
Your faithful hours attend;
Still Fancy, to herself unkind,
Awakes to grief the soften'd mind,
And points the bleeding friend.

By rapid Scheld's descending wave
His country's vows shall bless the grave,
Where'er the youth is laid:
That sacred spot the village hind
With every sweetest turf shall bind,
And Peace protect the shade.

Blest youth, regardful of thy doom,
Aërial hands shall build thy tomb,
With shadowy trophies crown'd;
Whilst Honour bathed in tears shall rove
To sigh thy name through every grove,
And call his heroes round.

The warlike dead of every age,
Who fill the fair recording page,
Shall leave their sainted rest;
And, half reclining on his spear,
Each wondering chief by turns appear,
To hail the blooming guest:

Old Edward's sons, unknown to yield,
Shall crowd from Cressy's laurel'd field,
And gaze with fix'd delight;
Again for Britain's wrongs they feel,
Again they snatch the gleamy steel,
And wish the avenging fight.

But lo, where, sunk in deep despair,
Her garments torn, her bosom bare
Impatient Freedom lies!
Her matted tresses madly spread,
To every sod, which wraps the dead,
She turns her joyless eyes.

Ne'er shall she leave that lowly ground
Till notes of triumph bursting round
Proclaim her reign restored:
Till William seek the sad retreat,
And, bleeding at her sacred feet,
Present the sated sword.

If, weak to soothe so soft a heart,
These pictured glories nought impart,
To dry thy constant tear:
If yet, in Sorrow's distant eye,
Exposed and pale thou see'st him lie,
Wild War insulting near:

Where'er from time thou court'st relief,
The Muse shall still, with social grief,
Her gentlest promise keep;
Even humbled Harting's cottaged vale
Shall learn the sad repeated tale,
And bid her shepherds weep.

## ODE TO EVENING

[Publ. 1747]

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own brawling springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales;

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit;
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene;
Or find some ruin, 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.

Or, if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves:
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy favourite name!

## ODE TO PEACE

[Publ. 1747]

O THOU, who bad'st thy turtles bear
Swift from his grasp thy golden hair,
And sought'st thy native skies;
When War, by vultures drawn from far,
To Britain bent his iron car,
And bade his storms arise!

Tired of his rude tyrannic sway,
Our youth shall fix some festive day,
His sullen shrines to burn:
But thou who hear'st the turning spheres,
What sounds may charm thy partial ears,
And gain thy blest return!

O Peace, thy injured robes up-bind!
O rise! and leave not one behind
Of all thy beamy train;
The British Lion, goddess sweet,
Lies stretch'd on earth to kiss thy feet,
And own thy holier reign.

Let others court thy transient smile,
But come to grace thy western isle,
By warlike Honour led;
And, while around her ports rejoice,
While all her sons adore thy choice,
With him for ever wed!

## THE PASSIONS

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

WHEN music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Throng'd around her magic cell,
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possest beyond the Muse's painting:
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturb'd, delighted, raised, refined;
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,
Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspired,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatch'd her instruments of sound;
And, as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each (for Madness ruled the hour)
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
E'en at the sound himself had made.
Next Anger rush'd; his eyes on fire,
In lightnings own'd his secret stings;
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurried hand the strings.
With woful measures wan Despair
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
Still it whisper'd promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong;
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She call'd on Echo still, through all the song;
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair.
And longer had she sung;—but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose;
He threw his blood-stain'd sword, in thunder, down;
And with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe:
And, ever and anon, he beat
The doubling drum, with furious heat;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied,
Yet still he kept his wild unalter'd mien,
While each strain'd ball of sight seem'd bursting from his head.
Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were fix'd;
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was mix'd;
And now it courted Love, now raving call'd on Hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale Melancholy sate retired;
And, from her wild sequester'd seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,

Pour'd through the mellow horn her pensive soul:
And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels join'd the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole,
Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of Peace, and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.
But O! how alter'd was its sprightlier tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call, to Faun and Dryad known!
The oak-crown'd Sisters, and their chaste-eyed Queen,
Satyrs and Sylvan Boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green:
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear.
Last came Joy's ecstatic trial:
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand addrest;
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best;
They would have thought who heard the strain
They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native maids,
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kiss'd the strings,
Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round:
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid,
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid!
Why, goddess! why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As, in that loved Athenian bower,
You learn'd an all commanding power,
Thy mimic soul, O Nymph endear'd,
Can well recall what then it heard;
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording Sister's page —
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age;
E'en all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound —
O bid our vain endeavours cease;
Revive the just designs of Greece:
Return in all thy simple state!
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

## DIRGE IN CYMBELINE

SUNG BY GUIDERUS AND ARVIRAGUS OVER FIDELE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD

[Publ. 1747]

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen;
No goblins lead their nightly crew:
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell;

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Beloved till life can charm no more,
And mourn'd till Pity's self be dead.

# THOMAS GRAY

## ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT

### DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD-FISHES

[Written 1747 and inclosed in a letter to Walpole]

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dy'd
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima reclin'd,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Thro' richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first, and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize: —
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat 's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant fate sat by, and smiled)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to ev'ry watery God,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd:
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.
A favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize:
Nor all, that glisters, gold.

## ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

[Publ. 1747]

*Ἄνθρωπός ἱκανὴ πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν*
MENANDER

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the wat'ry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's[1] holy Shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.

Ah happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
Ah fields belov'd in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green
The paths of pleasure trace;
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthrall?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

[1] Henry VI, founder of the College.

While some on earnest business bent
Their murmuring labours ply
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever-new
And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see how all around 'em wait
The ministers of human fate,
And black misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, shew them where in ambush stand
To seize their prey the murderous band!
Ah, tell them they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame that skulks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
And grinning infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,
And moody Madness laughing wild
Amid severest woe.

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their Queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every labouring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his sufferings: all are men,
Condemn'd alike to groan;
The tender for another's pain,
Th' unfeeling for his own.
Yet, ah! why should they know their fate,
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies?
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'T is folly to be wise.

## ELEGY

### WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

[Publ. 1751]

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to extasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pour upon the brook that babbles by.

'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

'One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

'The next, with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne;—
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

*The Epitaph*

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown:
Fair science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompence as largely send:
He gave to misery (all he had), a tear,
He gained from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

## TO ADVERSITY

[Publ. 1753]

Ζῆνα
Τὸν φρονεῖν Βροτοὺς ὁδῶ —
σαντα, τῳ πάθει μαδὰν
Θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

ÆSCHYLUS, *Agamemnon.*

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless Power,
Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour,
The bad affright, afflict the best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling child, design'd,
To thee he gave the heav'nly birth,
And bad to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learn'd to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer friend, the flatt'ring foe:
By vain Prosperity receiv'd,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believ'd.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd
Immers'd in rapturous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid,
With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm Charity, the general friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh, gently on thy suppliant's head,
Dread Goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
Nor circled with the vengeful band
(As by the impious thou art seen)
With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,
With screaming horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell disease, and ghastly poverty.

Thy form benign, oh Goddess! wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there
To soften, not to wound my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a man.

## SONNET

### ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST

[Written in 1742, the year of West's death; publ. posthumously by Mason.]

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require:
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:
To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

## ODE

### ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE

[Written perhaps 1754, publ. posthumously by Mason.]

Now the golden morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermil cheek, and whisper soft
She wooes the tardy Spring:
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance,
The birds his presence greet:
But chief, the sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling extasy;
And lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Yesterday the sullen year
Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the music of the air,
The herd stood drooping by:
Their raptures now that wildly flow,
No yesterday, nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries
With forward, and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past misfortune's brow
Soft reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of sorrow throw
A melancholy grace;
While hope prolongs our happier hour,
Or deepest shades, that dimly lower
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where rosy pleasure leads,
See a kindred grief pursue;
Behind the steps that misery treads
Approaching comfort view:
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;
And blended form, with artful strife
The strength and harmony of life.

See the wretch, that long has tost
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe, and walk again:
The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.

# OLIVER GOLDSMITH

## THE TRAVELLER

### OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

[Publ. 1765]

### TO THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH

DEAR SIR,—I am sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a Dedication; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now, with propriety, be only inscribed to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it, when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man, who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great, and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying away. But of all kinds of ambition, what from the refinement of the times, from different systems of criticism, and from the divisions of party, that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest.

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations; but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement, Painting and Music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival Poetry, and at length supplant her; they engross all that favour once shown to her, and, though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright.

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in greater danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests, and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say: for error is ever talkative.

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous, I mean Party. Party entirely distorts the judgment, and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with this disease, it can only find pleasure in what contributes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger, that seldom desists from pursuing man, after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader, who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing, who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet: his tawdry lampoons are called satires; his turbulence is said to be force, and his frenzy fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse, to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavoured to show, that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge better than yourself how far these positions are illustrated in this poem.

I am, dear sir, your most affectionate brother,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheld, or wandering Po;
Or onward, where the rude Corinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door;
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies;
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee:
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.
Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend;
Bless'd be that spot, where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire;
Bless'd that abode, where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair;

Bless'd be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.
But me, not destined such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent and care;
Impell'd with steps unceasing to pursue
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view;
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own.
E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;
And placed on high, above the storm's career,
Look downward where a hundred realms appear;
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.
When thus creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store, should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain?
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendour crown'd,
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round,
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale,
Ye bending swains, that dress the flowery vale,
For me your tributary stores combine;
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine.
As some lone miser, visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still;
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleased with each good that heaven to man supplies:
Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I wish, amidst the scene, to find
Some spot to real happiness consign'd,
Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
May gather bliss, to see my fellows bless'd.
But where to find that happiest spot below,
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease:
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods, for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
His first, best country ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind:
As different good, by art or nature given,
To different nations makes their blessings even.
Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at labour's earnest call;
With food as well the peasant is supplied
On Idra's cliff as Arno's shelvy side;
And though the rocky-crested summits frown,
These rocks, by custom, turn to beds of down.
From art more various are the blessings sent;
Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content:
Yet these each other's power so strong contest
That either seems destructive of the rest.
Where wealth and freedom reign contentment fails;
And honour sinks where commerce long prevails:

Hence every state, to one loved blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone:
Each to the favourite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends;
Till, carried to excess in each domain,
This favourite good begets peculiar pain.
But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies;
Here for awhile, my proper cares resign'd,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;
Like yon neglected shrub, at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.
Far to the right, where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends:
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride;
While oft some temple's mouldering tops between
With memorable grandeur mark the scene.
Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely bless'd.
Whatever fruits in different climes are found,
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die;
These here disporting own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While seaborn gales their gelid wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.
But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign;
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue:
And e'en in penance planning sins anew.
All evils here contaminate the mind,
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs, not far removed the date,
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state;
At her command the palace learn'd to rise,
Again the long fallen column sought the skies;
The canvass glow'd, beyond e'en Nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form:
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail;
While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,
But towns unmann'd and lords without a slave:
And late the nation found, with fruitless skill,
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.
Yet, still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
From these the feeble heart and long-fallen mind
An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade:
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguiled,
The sports of children satisfy the child:
Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul:
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind:
As in those domes, where Cæsars once bore sway,
Defaced by time, and tottering in decay,
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.
My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey
Where rougher climes a nobler race display,

Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread;
No product here the barren hills afford
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword:
No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter lingering chills the lap of May;
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.
Yet still, e'en here, content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,
He sees his little lot the lot of all;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
To shame the meanness of his humble shed;
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
To make him loathe his vegetable meal;
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.
Cheerful at morn, he wakes from short repose,
Breathes the keen air, and carols as he goes;
With patient angle trolls the finny deep,
Or drives his venturous ploughshare to the steep;
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
And drags the struggling savage into day.
At night returning, every labour sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;
While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board:
And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.
Thus every good his native wilds impart
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
And e'en those hills, that round his mansion rise,
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies:
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
But bind him to his native mountains more.
Such are the charms to barren states assign'd;
Their wants but few, their wishes all confined;
Yet let them only share the praises due,
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redress'd:
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies,
That first excites desire and then supplies;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame.
Catch every nerve and vibrate through the frame,
Their level life is but a mouldering fire,
Unquench'd by want, unfann'd by strong desire;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.
But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow;
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unalter'd, unimproved, the manners run;
And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest:
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Through life's more cultured walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.
To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn; and France displays her bright domain:

Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire!
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshen'd from the wave the zephyr flew.
And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill;
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze;
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,
Has frisk'd beneath the burden of threescore.
So bless'd a life these thoughtless realms display,
Thus idly busy rolls their world away:
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honour forms the social temper here:
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
Or e'en imaginary worth obtains,
Here passes current; paid from hand to hand,
It shifts, in splendid traffic, round the land:
From courts to camps, to cottages it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise;
They please, are pleased, they give to get esteem,
Till, seeming bless'd, they grow to what they seem.
But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise;
For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought;
And the weak soul, within itself unbless'd,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year:
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.
To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow,
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore:
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile:
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,
A new creation rescued from his reign.
Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain.
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here display'd. Their much loved wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear,
E'en liberty itself is barter'd here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies,
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonourable graves,
And, calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.
Heavens! how unlike their Belgic sires of old!
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold;
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow,
How much unlike the sons of Britain now!

Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes glide;
There all around the gentlest breezes stray,
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there combined,
Extremes are only in the master's mind;
Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great:
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashion'd, fresh from nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control,
While e'en the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man.
Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictured here,
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear;
Too bless'd indeed were such without alloy,
But, foster'd e'en by freedom, ills annoy;
That independence, Britons prize too high,
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie;
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown;
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd;
Ferments arise, imprison'd factions roar,
Repress'd ambition struggles round her shore;
Till, overwrought, the general system feels
Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.
Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honour fail to sway,
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown;
Till time may come, when, stripp'd of all her charms,
The land of scholars, and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toil'd, and poets wrote for fame,
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings unhonour'd die.
Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great:
Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,
Far from my bosom drive the low desire!
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
The rabble's rage, and tyrant's angry steel;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt or favour's fostering sun,
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure!
I only would repress them to secure;
For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those that toil;
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach
Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportion'd grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below.
Oh, then how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires!
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise to arms,
Except when fast approaching danger warms:
But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own;
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free;
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law;
The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,
Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home;

Fear, pity, justice, indignation, start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart;
Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.
Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour
When first ambition struck at regal power;
And thus polluting honour in its source,
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore?
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste;
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scatter'd hamlets rose
In barren solitary pomp repose?
Have we not seen, at pleasure's lordly call,
The smiling long-frequented village fall?
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decay'd,
The modest matron, and the blushing maid
Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,
To traverse climes beyond the western main;
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
And Niagara stuns with thundering sound?
E'en now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
Through tangled forests, and through dangerous ways;
Where beasts with man divided empire claim,
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go,
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.
Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind.
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find:
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

[Publ. 1770]

### To Sir Joshua Reynolds

Dear Sir, — I can have no expectations in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire: but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarce make any other answer, than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry, whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty

years past it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, dear sir, your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

SWEET AUBURN! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please:
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topp'd the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I bless'd the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree:
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession taught e'en toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain;
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But choked with sedges works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.
Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.
A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;

Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to luxury allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brighten'd all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.
Sweet AUBURN! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs — and God has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations pass'd,
Here to return — and die at home at last.
O bless'd retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How bless'd is he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands, in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be pass'd.
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
But all the blooming flush of life is fled;
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced, in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;

She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wish'd to change his place;
Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
The long remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt, at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all:
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.
At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service pass'd, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran:
E'en children follow'd, with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distress'd:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way
With blossom'd furze, unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school:
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd;
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declared how much he knew,
'T was certain he could write and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge:

In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
For e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But pass'd is all his fame. The very spot,
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the signpost caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nutbrown draughts inspired,
Where graybeard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place;
The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door,
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.
Vain transitory splendours! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be press'd,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.
Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their firstborn sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?
Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure all,
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are pass'd, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd:
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourged by famine, from the smiling land
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.
Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
To scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped — What waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind:
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know,
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomp display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way;
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare,
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies:
She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart, deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet AUBURN, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around:
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they:
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,

The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.
Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That call'd them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure pass'd,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go,
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms
And left a lover's for her father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.
O luxury! thou cursed by heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own:
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
E'en now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
E'en now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness are there;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade,
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well;
Farewell! and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;
Aid slighted Truth with thy persuasive train;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possess'd,
Though very poor, may still be very bless'd;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
While self dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

## STANZAS ON WOMAN

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom — is, to die.

# WILLIAM COWPER

## VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE ON THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard;
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, — do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair,
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There 's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

## THE TASK

[Publ. 1785]

### BOOK V

### THE WINTER MORNING WALK

ARGUMENT

A frosty morning — The foddering of cattle — The woodman and his dog — The poultry — Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall — The Empress of Russia's palace of ice — Amusements of monarchs — War, one of them — Wars, whence — And whence monarchy — The evils of it — English and French loyalty contrasted — The Bastille, and a prisoner there — Liberty the chief recommendation of this country — Modern patriotism questionable, and why — The perishable nature of the best human institutions — Spiritual liberty not perishable — The slavish state of man by nature — Deliver him, Deist, if you can — Grace must do it — The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated — Their different treatment — Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free — His relish of the works of God — Address to the Creator.

'T IS morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon: while the clouds

That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportioned limb
Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they designed to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.

Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossiped side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-considered steps, seems to resent
His altered gait and stateliness retrenched.
How find the myriads that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?

Earth yields them nought: the imprisoned worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie covered close; and berry-bearing thorns
That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long-protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts, self-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut now
Repays their labour more; and perched aloft
By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away.
Not so, where scornful of a check it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below:
No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroidered banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorned before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam; there embossed and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ!
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the North. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls; but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear:
In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of Winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side; a watery light
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frostbound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers, that feared no enemy but warmth,
Blushed on the panels. Mirror needed none
Where all was vitreous; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seemed at least commodious seat) were there,

Sofa and couch and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all,
And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.
Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesigned severity, that glanced
(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable; as worthless as it seemed
Intrinsically precious; to the foot
Treacherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.
Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain high.
Some have amused the dull sad years of life,
Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war 's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.
When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder, and assigned their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care: they ploughed and sowed,
And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood;
The Deluge washed it out, but left unquenched
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some,
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth; these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem, or courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader; him they served in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?
Or who so worthy to control themselves
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes?
Thus war affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,

Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice ; and besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise."
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle : drudges born
To bear his burdens; drawing in his gears
And sweating in his service; his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning, and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnished into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
Storks among frogs, that have but croaked and died.
Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence fit only for a god
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
Even in the cradled weakness of the world !
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made !
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevailed,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest !
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because delivered down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land ?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given or wrong sustained,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die ?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude ? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise ?

We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them: him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:
But recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the State,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours:
We love the man, the paltry pageant you;
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
You the regardless author of its woes;
We, for the sake of liberty, a king,
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved
Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning praise,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.
Whose freedom is by suffrance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
The State that strives for liberty, though foiled,
And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that 's a cause
Not often unsuccessful; power usurped
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts,
The surest presage of the good they seek.[1]
Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh — the Bastille.
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There 's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
That even our enemies, so oft employed
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he who values liberty confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemned untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There, like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;
And ever as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect, that though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,

[1] The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast or ball;
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight —
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard shifting and without her tools —
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own —
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider, till the pampered pest
Is made familiar, watches its approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend —
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
Then downward, and then upward, then aslant,
And then alternate, with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish, till the sum exactly found
In all directions, he begins again: —
Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow-man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
Moves indignation, makes the name of king
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)
As dreadful as the Manichean God,
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of discovery, and begets,
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
By public exigence till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the State,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free,
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives
From nature's bounty — that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl;
Yet being free I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains nowhere patiently, and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And if I must bewail the blessing lost
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere,
In scenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!

But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Designed by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough:
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend
Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause
Who slights the charities for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?
'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose tempered blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,
And hewed them link from link. Then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,
And shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once called to public view.
'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And seeing the old castle of the State,
That promised once more firmness, so assailed
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless, expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour
Was registered in heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock;
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;
And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,
The indiscoverable secret sleeps.
But there is yet a liberty unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate take away;
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And sealed with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them His,
And are august, but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the Word
That, finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose the artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had He not Himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And still designing a more glorious far,
Doomed it as insufficient for His praise.
These therefore are occasional, and pass;
Formed for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labours of His love: they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits He sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty; a flight into His arms,
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe.
Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,

Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force
Resistless, from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downwards; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures —
What does he not? from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery; future death,
And death still future: not an hasty stroke
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forgery, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquished. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-lived, the puny child
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse,
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foiled
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with Appetite, and pleads the cause
Perversely, which of late she so condemned;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tattered in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.
"Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
And stored the earth so plenteously with means
To gratify the hunger of his wish,
And doth He reprobate, and will He damn,
The use of His own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? Have they faith
In what, with such solemnity of tone
And gesture, they propound to our belief?
Nay, — conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
Is but an instrument on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."
Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
To excuses in which reason has no part)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged,
(As often as, libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import,)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;
Till hardened his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but fostered his disease;
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness; moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
Directly to THE FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers

Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise;
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
Till it outmantle all the pride of verse. —
Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass,
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide wandering soul.
The *still small voice* is wanted. He must speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.
Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic Muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those who, posted at the shrine of truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure to his loved land,
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
Till Persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew —
No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.[1]
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There 's not a chain
That hellish foes confederate for his harm
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor perhaps compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say — "My Father made them all!"
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That planned, and built, and still upholds a world
So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
Yes — ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find

[1] See Hume.

In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who unimpeached
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
Of no mean city, planned or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every State,
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain,
And that to bind him is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom He dwells.
Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed
The paradise he sees, he finds it such;
And such well-pleased to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind that has been touched from Heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for His
Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise;
Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees Him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she owned before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked,
A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference; enquires what strains were they
With which heaven rang, when every star, in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy. — "Tell me, ye shining hosts
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race
Favoured as ours, transgressors from the womb,
And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one who long detained on foreign shores
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land,
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,

Ordained to guide the embodied spirit
home,
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that, infused from Heaven, must
thither tend."
So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost,
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast
built,
With means that were not till by thee em-
ployed,
Worlds that had never been hadst Thou in
strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee
Till Thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is in-
deed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to
learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet deemed oracular, lure down to death
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.
We give to Chance, blind Chance, our-
selves as blind,
The glory of thy work, which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely
judged.
But Chance is not; or is not where Thou
reignest:
Thy Providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to con-
found)
To mix the wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing, while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods
that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure,
Made such by thee, we love thee for that
cause
For which we shunned and hated thee before.
Then we are free: then liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from
heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice
of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works,
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment, Nature throwing
wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power de-
nied.
Thou art the source and centre of all
minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word!
From thee departing, they are lost and
rove
At random without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that soothes the life of
man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to
serve.
But oh, Thou bounteous Giver of all good!
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are
poor;
And with Thee rich, take that Thou wilt
away.

## THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

### SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN

[Publ. 1783]

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin — who but he?
His fame soon spread around;
"He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
"'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin! — Here's the house!"
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired;" —
Said Gilpin — "So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there!
For why? — his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly — which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall —
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come,
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here, —
They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus showed his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first;
For why?— they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain:
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:

"Stop thief! stop thief!— a highwayman!"
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king!
And Gilpin, long live he!
And when he next doth ride abroad
May I be there to see!

## ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM

[Publ. 1798]

Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine — thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blessed be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own:
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she.
My mother! when I learnt that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss —
Ah, that maternal smile! It answers — Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? — It was. — Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learnt at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps, of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheek bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and brakes
That humour interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.
Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart — the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might. —
But no — what here we call our life is such
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)

Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar."
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed —
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest tost,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise —
The son of parents passed into the skies!
And now, farewell — Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine:
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft —
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

## THE POPLAR FIELD

THE poplars are felled; farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charmed me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

## ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED

[Written Sept., 1782]

*To the march in "Scipio."*

TOLL for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

## TO THE NIGHTINGALE

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1792

WHENCE is it, that amazed I hear
From yonder withered spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favour shown,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practised in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee, in song?

Or sing'st thou rather, under force
Of some divine command,
Commissioned to presage a course
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing,
To make even January charm,
And every season Spring.

## TO MARY

[Publ. 1793]

THE twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah, would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou playedst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet, gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

# ROBERT BURNS

## ADDRESS TO THE DEIL

[Publ. 1786]

O Prince! O Chief of many thronèd pow'rs!
That led th' embattl'd seraphim to war.
MILTON.

I

O THOU! whatever title suit thee —
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie —
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

II

Hear me, Auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damnèd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me
An' hear us squeel.

III

Great is thy pow'r an' great thy fame;
Far kend an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou 's neither lag, nor lame,
Nor blate, nor scaur.

IV

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners trying;
Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

V

I 've heard my rev'rend graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or, where auld ruin'd castles grey
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.

VI

When twilight did my graunie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she 's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

VII

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The star shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you mysel, I gat a fright:
Ayont the lough,
Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sugh.

VIII

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake;
When wi' an eldritch, stoor "quaick, quaick,"
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistling wings.

IX

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

X

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For O! the yellow treasure 's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint hawkie 's gaen
As yell 's the bill.

XI

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen an' croose;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantraip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

XII

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy boord,
Then, water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

XIII

And aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

XIV

When Masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

XV

Lang syne in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r:

XVI

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog!
Ye cam to Paradise incog,
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue
(Black be your fa'!),
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

XVII

D' ye mind that day when in a bizz
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better folk;
An' sklented on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke?

XVIII

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
While scabs an' botches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw;
An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd wicked scaul —
Was warst ava?

XIX

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

XX

An' now, Auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bareie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
To your black Pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
An' cheat you yet.

XXI

But fare-you-weel, Auld Nickie-Ben!
O, wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
Still hae a stake:
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

## THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

[Publ. 1786]

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.
GRAY.

I

My lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there I ween!

II

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;

The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes —
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

III

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

IV

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame; perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

V

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears.
The parents partial eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI

Their master's and their mistress's command
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

VII

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care, enquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

VIII

With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill taen;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.

IX

O happy love! where love like this is found:
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare: —
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

X

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling, smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

XI

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell;
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

XII

The chearfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride.
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

XIII

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name;
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise.

XIV

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal Bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,

Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

XVI

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XVII

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art;
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart,
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

XVIII

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with Grace Divine preside.

XIX

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of Hell, in wickedness refin'd!

XX

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

XXI

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part:
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

## TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

I

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle!

II

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion
An' fellow mortal!

III

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss 't!

IV

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

V

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

VI

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou 's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

VII

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

VIII

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

## TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786

I

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou 's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

II

Alas! it 's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckl'd breast!
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

III

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

IV

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

V

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

VI

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

VII

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On Life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!

Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

VIII

Such fate to suffering Worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink;
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

IX

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

## TO A LOUSE

### ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH

I

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly,
I canna say but ye strunt rarely
Owre gauze and lace,
Tho' faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

II

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her —
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

III

Swith! in some beggar's hauffet squattle:
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

IV

Now haud you there! ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rils, snug an' tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
Till ye've got on it —
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

V

My sooth! right bauld ye set yer nose out
As plump an' grey as onie grozet:
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie ye sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum.

VI

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! fye!
How daur ye do't?

VII

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursèd speed
The blastie's makin!
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

VIII

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

## SONG: COMPOSED IN AUGUST

I

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;
The gorcock springs on whirring wings
Amang the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
The moon shines bright, as I rove by night
To muse upon my charmer.

II

The paitrick lo'es the fruitfu' fells,
The plover lo'es the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells,
The soaring hern the fountains;

Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path o' man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

III

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine,
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
Tyrannic man's dominion!
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring cry,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

IV

But, Peggy dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow,
The sky is blue, the fields in view
All fading-green and yellow:
Come, let us stray our gladsome way
And view the charms of Nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And ilka happy creature.

V

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
While the silent moon shines clearly;
I'll clasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
Swear how I lo'e thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
Not Autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

## ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID

### OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
An' lump them ay thegither:
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither;
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
SOLOMON (Eccles. vii. 16)

I

O YE, wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye 've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebours' fauts and folly;
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water;
The heapet happer 's ebbing still,
An' still the clap plays clatter!

II

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals:
I for their thoughtless, careless sakes
Would here propone defences —
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

III

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave;
That purity ye pride in;
And (what 's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin.

IV

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

V

See Social-life and Glee sit down
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrify'd, they 're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O, would they stay to calculate,
Th' eternal consequences,
Or — your more dreaded hell to state —
Damnation of expenses!

VI

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases:
A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treach'rous inclination —
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye 're aiblins nae temptation.

VII

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:

One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

VIII

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us:
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let 's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What 's done we partly may compute,
But know not what 's resisted.

## A WINTER NIGHT

[Publ. 1786]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pityless storm!
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?

SHAKESPEARE.

I

When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

II

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked;
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked;
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or, thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl:

III

List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scaur.

IV

Ilk happing bird — wee, helpless thing! —
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

V

Ev'n you, on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost and sheep-cote spoil'd
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats!

VI

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark-mufflʼd, viewʼd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow-solemn, stole: —

VII

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumin'd Man on brother Man bestows!
See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale:
How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show —
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd —
Plac'd for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile, below!
Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honor's lofty brow,
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone?
Mark Maiden-Innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares:
This boasted Honor turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing pray'rs!

Perhaps this hour, in Misery's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

VIII

"O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw, he lays himself to sleep;
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill, o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushèd low
By cruel Fortune's undeservèd blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

IX

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind
Thro' all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

## THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST

[Publ. 1786]

TUNE: *Roslin Castle*

I

THE gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast;
Yon murky cloud is filled with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatt'red coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

II

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn
By early Winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid, azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly;
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave:
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonie banks of Ayr.

III

'T is not the surging billows' roar,
'T is not that fatal, deadly shore;
Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear:
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonie banks of Ayr.

IV

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched Fancy roves,
Pursuing past unhappy loves!
Farewell my friends! farewell my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare,
Farewell, my bonie banks of Ayr.

## TAM O' SHANTER

A TALE

[Publ. 1791]

Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this Buke.
GAWIN DOUGLAS.

Alloway Kirk was originally the church of the *quoad civilia* parish of Alloway; but this parish having been annexed to that of Ayr in 1690, the church fell more or less to ruin, and when Burns wrote had been roofless for half a century.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet;
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,

We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam, had'st thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah! gentle dames, it gars me greet,
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthen'd, sage advices
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy cronie:
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious
Wi' secret favours, sweet and precious:
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread:
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white — then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride:
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze,
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae, we 'll face the Devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A tousie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some devilish cantraip sleight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light:
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief new-cutted frae a rape —
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks wi' blude red-rusted;
Five scymitars wi' murder crusted;
A garter which a babe had strangled;
A knife a father's throat had mangled —
Whom his ain son o' life bereft —
The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awefu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen! —
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach!

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie:
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after kend on Carrick shore
(For monie a beast to dead she shot,
An' perish'd monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear).
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie. . . .
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('t was a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her power:
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jad she was and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud:
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skriech and hollo.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou 'll get thy fairin!
In hell they 'll roast thee like a herrin!

In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou they tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear:
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

## HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER

And send the godly in a pet to pray.
POPE.

### ARGUMENT

Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline — a Mr. Gavin Hamilton — *Holy Willie* and his priest, Father Auld, after fuil hearing in the Presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the country. On losing his process, the muse overheard him at his devotions, as follows."

I

O THOU that in the Heavens does dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thysel,
Sends ane to Heaven an' ten to Hell
A' for Thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done before Thee!

II

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here before Thy sight,
For gifts an' grace
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.

III

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserv'd most just damnation
For broken laws
Sax thousand years ere my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause!

IV

When from my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plung'd me deep in hell
To gnash my gooms, and weep, and wail
In burning lakes,
Whare damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to their stakes.

V

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample:
I 'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example
To a' Thy flock!

VI

But yet, O Lord! confess I must:
At times I 'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;
An' sometimes, too, in warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled wi' sin.

VII

O Lord! yestreen, Thou kens, wi' Meg —
Thy pardon I sincerely beg —
O, may 't ne'er be a living plague
To my dishonour!
An' I 'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

VIII

Besides, I farther maun avow —
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times, I trow —
But, Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I cam near her,
Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
Wad never steer her.

IX

Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre proud and high should turn
That he 's sae gifted:
If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne
Until Thou lift it.

X

Lord, bless Thy chosen in this place,
For here Thou has a chosen race!
But God confound their stubborn face
An' blast their name,
Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
An' open shame!

XI

Lord, mind Gau'n Hamilton's deserts:
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin arts
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain Priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.

XII

And when we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
And set the warld in a roar
O' laughin at us:
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail an' potatoes!

XIII

Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r
Against that Presbyt'ry of Ayr!
Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak it bare
Upo' their heads!
Lord, visit them, an' dinna spare,
For their misdeeds!

XIV

O Lord, my God! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My vera heart and flesh are quakin
To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,
An' pish'd wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin lip an' snakin,
Held up his head.

XV

Lord, in Thy day o' vengeance try him!
Lord, visit him wha did employ him!
And pass not in Thy mercy by them,
Nor hear their pray'r,
But for Thy people's sake destroy them,
An' dinna spare!

XVI

But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal and divine,
That I for grace an' gear may shine
Excell'd by nane;
And a' the glory shall be Thine —
Amen, Amen!

## A ROSE-BUD, BY MY EARLY WALK

"This song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruickshank, only child to my worthy friend Mr. Wm. Cruickshank, of the High School, Edinburgh. The air is by David Sillar, *quondam* merchant, and now schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the 'Davie' to whom I address my printed poetical epistle in the measure of *The Cherry and the Slae*." (R. B.)

I

A ROSE-BUD, by my early walk
Adown a corn-inclosèd bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.
Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

II

Within the bush her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast,
Sae early in the morning.
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
Awake the early morning.

III

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tents thy early morning!
So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning!

## THE SILVER TASSIE

"This air is Oswald's; the first half stanza: —

> "'Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
> And fill it in a silver tassie,
> That I may drink before I go
> A service to my bonie lassie:'" —

is old; the rest is mine." (R. B.)

I

Go, fetch to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie,
That I may drink before I go
A service to my bonie lassie!

The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the Ferry,
The ship rides by the Berwick-Law,
And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

II

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are rankèd ready,
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes deep and bloody.
It 's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad mak me langer wish to tarry,
Nor shouts o' war that 's heard afar:
It 's leaving thee, my bonie Mary!

## OF A' THE AIRTS

"The air is by Marshall; the song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. *N. B.* It was during the honeymoon." (R. B.)

I

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between,
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

II

I see her in the dewy flowers —
I see her sweet and fair.
I hear her in the tunefu' birds —
I hear her charm the air.
There 's not a bonie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There 's not a bonie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

## MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

"The first half stanza of this song is old; the rest is mine." (R. B.)

CHORUS

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart 's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe —
My heart 's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

I

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth!
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

II

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow,
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below,
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods,
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods!

CHORUS

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart 's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe —
My heart 's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

## JOHN ANDERSON MY JO

I

John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw,
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo!

II

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And monie a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we 'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo!

## THOU LINGERING STAR

[Publ. 1789]

I

Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

II

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity cannot efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace —
Ah! little thought we 't was our last!

III

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods thickening green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
'Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

IV

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser-care.
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

## WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O'MAUT

[Publ. 1789]

"The air is Masterton's; the song mine. The occasion of it was this: Mr. Wm. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan (who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton) and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such a joyous meeting that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business." (R. B.)

CHORUS

We are na fou, we 're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we 'll taste the barley-bree!

I

O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see.
Three blyther hearts that lee-lang night
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

II

Here are we met three merry boys,
Three merry boys I trow are we;
And monie a night we 've merry been,
And monie mae we hope to be!

III

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That 's blinkin in the lift sae hie:
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth, she 'll wait a wee!

IV

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the King amang us three!

CHORUS

We are na fou, we 're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we 'll taste the barley-bree!

## AE FOND KISS

I

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I 'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I 'll wage thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

II

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy:
Naething could resist my Nancy!
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted —
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

III

Fare-the-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-the-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I 'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I 'll wage thee.

## THE BANKS O' DOON

I

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!
Thou 'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn!
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

II

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause luver staw my rose —
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

## THE DEIL'S AWA WI' TH' EXCISEMAN

CHORUS

The Deil's awa, the Deil's awa,
The Deil 's awa wi' th' Exciseman!
He 's danc'd awa, he 's danc'd awa,
He 's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

I

The Deil cam fiddlin thro' the town,
And danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman,
And ilka wife cries: — "Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o' the prize, man!

II

"We 'll mak our maut, and we 'll brew our drink,
We 'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man,
And monie braw thanks to the meikle black Deil,
That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman."

III

There 's threesome reels, there 's foursome reels,
There 's hornpipes and strathpeys, man,
But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land
Was *The Deil's Awa wi' th' Exciseman.*

CHORUS

The Deil 's awa, the Deil 's awa,
The Deil 's awa wi' th' Exciseman!
He 's danc'd awa, he 's danc'd awa,
He 's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

## THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS

I

The lovely lass of Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en to morn she cries "Alas!"
And ay the saut tear blin's her e'e: —

II

"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day —
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear and brethren three.

III

"Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growin green to see,
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e.

IV

"Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be,
For monie a heart thou hast made sair
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee!"

## A RED, RED ROSE

I

O, MY luve is like a red, red rose,
That 's newly sprung in June.
O, my luve is like the melodie,
That 's sweetly play'd in tune.

II

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

III

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

IV

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

## AULD LANG SYNE

[Sent to Mrs. Dunlop, 17th December, 1788.]

CHORUS

FOR auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We 'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

I

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

II

And surely ye 'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I 'll be mine,
And we 'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

III

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine,
But we 've wander'd monie a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.

IV

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

V

And there 's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie 's a hand o' thine,
And we 'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne!

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We 'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

## COMIN THRO' THE RYE

CHORUS

O, JENNY 's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny 's seldom dry:
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

I

Comin thro' the rye, poor body,
Comin thro' the rye,
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

II

Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?

III

Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the glen,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need the warld ken?

CHORUS

O, Jenny 's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny 's seldom dry:
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

## DUNCAN GRAY

[Enclosed to Thomson 4th December, 1792.]

I

Duncan Gray cam here to woo
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!)
On blythe Yule-Night when we were fou
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh —
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

II

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!),
Meg was deaf as Ailsa craig
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleer't an' blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn —
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

III

Time and Chance are but a tide
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
Slighted love is sair to bide
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
"Shall I like a fool," quoth he,
"For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to — France for me!" —
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

IV

How it comes, let doctors tell
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
Meg grew sick, as he grew hale
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings,
And O! her een they spak sic things! —
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

V

Duncan was a lad o' grace
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!),
Maggie's was a piteous case
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they 're crouse and canty baith —
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

## SAW YE BONIE LESLEY

[Publ. 1792]

I

O, saw ye bonie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the Border?
She 's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther!

II

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!

III

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley —
Thy subjects, we before thee!
Thou art divine, fair Lesley —
The hearts o' men adore thee.

IV

The Deil he could na skaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee:
He 'd look into thy bonie face,
And say: — "I canna wrang thee!"

V

The Powers aboon will tent thee,
Misfortune sha'na steer thee:
Thou 'rt like themsel' sae lovely,
That ill they 'll ne'er let near thee.

VI

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag we hae a lass
There 's nane again sae bonie.

## SCOTS, WHA HAE

[First published in *The Morning Chronicle*, May, 1794.]

I

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!

II

Now 's the day, and now 's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour,
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and slaverie!

III

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave? —
Let him turn, and flee!

IV

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

V

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free!

VI

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty 's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

## HIGHLAND MARY

[Sent to Thomson, 14th November, 1792.]

I

Ye banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There Summer first unfald her robes,
And there the langest tarry!
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary!

II

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie:
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

III

Wi' monie a vow and lock'd embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder.
But O, fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

IV

O, pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly;
And clos'd for ay, the sparkling glance
That dwalt on me sae kindly;
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

## IS THERE FOR HONEST POVERTY

I

Is there for honest poverty
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by —
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man 's the gowd for a' that.

II

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine —
A man 's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

III

Ye see yon birkie ca'd "a lord,"
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He 's but a cuif for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

IV

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that!
But an honest man 's aboon his might —
Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense an' pride o' worth
Are higher rank than a' that.

V

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that)
That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree an' a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
It 's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that.

## THERE WAS A LASS

I

THERE was a lass, and she was fair!
At kirk and market to be seen
When a' our fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonie Jean.

II

And ay she wrought her country wark,
And ay she sang sae merrilie:
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she!

III

But hawks will rob the tender joys,
That bless the little lintwhite's nest,
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

IV

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen,
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

V

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down,
And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown!

VI

As in the bosom of the stream
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en,
So, trembling pure, was tender love
Within the breast of bonie Jean.

VII

And now she works her country's wark,
And ay she sighs wi' care and pain,
Yet wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad make her weel again.

VIII

But did na Jeanie's heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her e'e,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love
Ae e'enin on the lily lea?

IX

While monie a bird sang sweet o' love,
And monie a flower blooms o'er the dale,
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And whisper'd thus his tender tale: —

X

"O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear.
O, canst thou think to fancy me?
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi' me?

XI

"At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee,
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me."

XII

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na!
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was ay between them twa.

## MARY MORISON

[This was sent to Thomson, 20th March, 1793.]

I

O MARY, at thy window be!
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour.
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor.

How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure —
The lovely Mary Morison!

II

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd and said amang them a': —
"Ye are na Mary Morison!"

III

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown:
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

# WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

## A NIGHT-PIECE

[Written 1798. Publ. 1815]

Composed on the road between Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, extempore. I distinctly recollect the very moment when I was struck, as described, — "He looks up — the clouds are split," etc.

—— The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground — from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up — the clouds are split
Asunder, — and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not! — the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent; — still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

## WE ARE SEVEN

—— A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
— Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! — I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'T was throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

## EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

[Publ. 1798]

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books? — that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye — it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, wher'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"— Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

## THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

[Publ. 1798]

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blythe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless —
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

## LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798

No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my Sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol.

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft —
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,

The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

## THERE WAS A BOY

[Publ. 1800]

Written in Germany. This is an extract from the poem on my own poetical education. This practice of making an instrument of their own fingers is known to most boys, though some are more skilful at it than others. William Raincock of Rayrigg, a fine spirited lad, took the lead of all my schoolfellows in this art.

THERE was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander! — many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. — And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, — with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.
This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And, through that church-yard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute — looking at the grave in which he lies!

## NUTTING

[Publ. 1800]

—— IT seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,

A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame —
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, — and, in truth,
More ragged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene! — A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet; — or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And — with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep —
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past;
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky —
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch — for there is a spirit in the woods.

## "STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I KNOWN"

[Publ. 1800]

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

## "SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS"

[Publ. 1800]

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

## "I TRAVELLED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN"

[Publ. 1807]

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'T is past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

## "THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER"

[Publ. 1800]

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake — The work was done —
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

## "A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL"

[Publ. 1800]

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

## LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE

[Publ. 1800]

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
— The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night —
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'T is scarcely afternoon —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept — and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet;"
— When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

— Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

## RUTH

[Publ. 1800]

When Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own;
Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak:
— While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls — a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues;
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire;
— Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

"What days and what bright years! Ah me!
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while," said he, "to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love;
"For there," said he, "are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

"Beloved Ruth!" — No more he said,
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again — and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth — so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions linked to form so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A Man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
"O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

"Before me shone a glorious world —
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

"No more of this; for now, by thee
Dear Ruth! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remained, not one, —
They stirred him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth! — Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May;
— They all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves — she loved them still;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old:
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild —
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

## THE PRELUDE; OR, GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND

### AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM

[Written 1799–1805. Publ. 1850]

### BOOK I

[Lines 301–475]

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favoured in my birth-place, and no less
In that beloved Vale to which erelong
We were transplanted; — there were we let loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation; — moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less, when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
Had in high places built her lodge; though mean
Our object and inglorious, yet the end

Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth — and with what motion moved the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange, that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
Opening the peaceful clouds; or she would use
Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cove, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark, —
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;

Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things —
With life and nature — purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us — for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six, — I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures, — the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry, when ye, through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
Impressed, upon all forms, the characters
Of danger or desire; and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth,
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
Work like a sea?

BOOK II

[Lines 386–451]

My seventeenth year was come
And, whether from this habit rooted now
So deeply in my mind, or from excess
In the great social principle of life
Coercing all things into sympathy,
To unorganic natures were transferred
My own enjoyments; or the power of truth
Coming in revelation, did converse
With things that really are; I, at this time,
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on,
From Nature and her overflowing soul,
I had received so much, that all my thoughts

Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love.
One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.

If this be error, and another faith
Find easier access to the pious mind,
Yet were I grossly destitute of all
Those human sentiments that make this earth
So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born.
If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires —
The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,
This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
If, 'mid indifference and apathy,
And wicked exultation when good men
On every side fall off, we know not how,
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
Of peace and quiet and domestic love
Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers
On visionary minds; if, in this time
Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith
That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life — the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 't is yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.

## BOOK III

### [Lines 1–166]

### RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE

It was a dreary morning when the wheels
Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,
And nothing cheered our way till first we saw
The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift
Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
Extended high above a dusky grove.

Advancing, we espied upon the road
A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap,
Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,
Or covetous of exercise and air;
He passed — nor was I master of my eyes
Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.
As near and nearer to the spot we drew,
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.
Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught,
While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of Cam;
And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn.

My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope;
Some friends I had, acquaintances who there
Seemed friends, poor simple schoolboys, now hung round
With honour and importance: in a world
Of welcome faces up and down I roved;
Questions, directions, warnings and advice,
Flowed in upon me, from all sides; fresh day
Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seemed
A man of business and expense, and went

From shop to shop about my own affairs,
To Tutor or to Tailor, as befell,
From street to street with loose and careless mind.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roamed
Delighted through the motley spectacle;
Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,
Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gateways, towers:
Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,
A northern villager.
As if the change
Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attired
In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and hair
Powdered like rimy trees, when frost is keen.
My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by,
With other signs of manhood that supplied
The lack of beard. — The weeks went roundly on,
With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping within, and all without
Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

The Evangelist St. John my patron was:
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;
Right underneath, the College kitchens made
A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,
But hardly less industrious; with shrill notes
Of sharp command and scolding intermixed.
Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,
Who never let the quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours
Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
And from my pillow, looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's room
All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,
With loyal students, faithful to their books,
Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,
And honest dunces — of important days,
Examinations, when the man was weighed
As in a balance! of excessive hopes,
Tremblings withal and commendable fears,
Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad —
Let others that know more speak as they know.
Such glory was but little sought by me,
And little won. Yet from the first crude days
Of settling time in this untried abode,
I was disturbed at times by prudent thoughts,
Wishing to hope without a hope, some fears
About my future worldly maintenance,
And, more than all, a strangeness in the mind,
A feeling that I was not for that hour,
Nor for that place. But wherefore be cast down?
For (not to speak of Reason and her pure
Reflective acts to fix the moral law
Deep in the conscience, nor of Christian Hope,
Bowing her head before her sister Faith
As one far mightier), hither I had come,
Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy powers
And faculties, whether to work or feel.
Oft when the dazzling show no longer new
Had ceased to dazzle, oftimes did I quit
My comrades, leave the crowd, buildings and groves,
And as I paced alone the level fields
Far from those lovely sights and sounds sublime
With which I had been conversant, the mind
Drooped not; but there into herself returning,
With prompt rebound seemed fresh as heretofore.
At least I more distinctly recognised
Her native instincts: let me dare to speak
A higher language, say that now I felt
What independent solaces were mine,
To mitigate the injurious sway of place
Or circumstance, how far soever changed

In youth, or *to* be changed in after years.
As if awakened, summoned, roused, constrained,
I looked for universal things; perused
The common countenance of earth and sky:
Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace
Of that first Paradise whence man was driven;
And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed
By the proud name she bears — the name of Heaven.
I called on both to teach me what they might;
Or, turning the mind in upon herself,
Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my thoughts
And spread them with a wider creeping; felt
Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable. But peace! enough
Here to record that I was mounting now
To such community with highest truth —
A track pursuing, not untrod before,
From strict analogies by thought supplied
Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.
To every natural form, rock, fruits, or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
Lay imbedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love
Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
From transitory passion, unto this
I was as sensitive as waters are
To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
Of passion; was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.
Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich —
I had a world about me — 't was my own;
I made it, for it only lived to me,
And to the God who sees into the heart.
Such sympathies, though rarely, were betrayed
By outward gestures and by visible looks:
Some called it madness — so indeed it was,
If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,
If steady moods of thoughtfulness matured
To inspiration, sort with such a name;
If prophecy be madness; if things viewed
By poets in old time, and higher up
By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,
May in these tutored days no more be seen
With undisordered sight. But leaving this,
It was no madness, for the bodily eye
Amid my strongest workings evermore
Was searching out the lines of difference
As they lie hid in all external forms,
Near or remote, minute or vast; an eye
Which, from a tree, a stone, a withered leaf,
To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
Could find no surface where its power might sleep;
Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
And by an unrelenting agency
Did bind my feelings even as in a chain.

## BOOK III

[Lines 275–321.]

Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington
I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn shade;
Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his tales
Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State —
Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend!
Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,
Stood almost single; uttering odious truth —
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,
Soul awful — if the earth has ever lodged
An awful soul — I seemed to see him here
Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth —
A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
And conscious step of purity and pride.

Among the band of my compeers was one
Whom chance had stationed in the very room
Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate Bard!
Be it confest that, for the first time, seated
Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,
One of a festive circle, I poured out
Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride
And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain
Never excited by the fumes of wine
Before that hour, or since. Then, forth I ran
From the assembly; through a length of streets,
Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door
In not a desperate or opprobrious time,
Albeit long after the importunate bell
Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra voice
No longer haunting the dark winter night.
Call back, O Friend![1] a moment to thy mind,
The place itself and fashion of the rites.
With careless ostentation shouldering up
My surplice, through the inferior throng I clove
Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood
On the last skirts of their permitted ground,
Under the pealing organ. Empty thoughts!
I am ashamed of them: and that great Bard,
And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample mind
Hast placed me high above my best deserts,
Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,
In some of its unworthy vanities,
Brother to many more.

## BOOK IV

### [Lines 256–338]

As one who hangs down-bending from the side
Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast
Of a still water, solacing himself
With such discoveries as his eye can make
Beneath him in the bottom of the deep,
Sees many beauteous sights — weeds, fishes, flowers,
Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,
Yet often is perplexed, and cannot part
The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth
Of the clear flood, from things which there abide
In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam
Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
And wavering motions sent he knows not whence,
Impediments that make his task more sweet;
Such pleasant office have we long pursued
Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
With like success, nor often have appeared
Shapes fairer or less doubtfully discerned
Than these to which the Tale, indulgent Friend!
Would now direct thy notice. Yet in spite
Of pleasure won, and knowledge not withheld,
There was an inner falling off — I loved,
Loved deeply all that had been loved before,
More deeply even than ever: but a swarm
Of heady schemes jostling each other, gawds,
And feast and dance, and public revelry,
And sports and games (too grateful in themselves,
Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,
Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh
Of manliness and freedom) all conspired
To lure my mind from firm habitual quest
Of feeding pleasures, to depress the zeal
And damp those yearnings which had once been mine —
A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given up
To his own eager thoughts. It would demand
Some skill, and longer time than may be spared
To paint these vanities, and how they wrought
In haunts where they, till now, had been unknown.
It seemed the very garments that I wore
Preyed on my strength, and stopped the quiet stream
Of self-forgetfulness.
Yes, that heartless chase
Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
For books and nature at that early age.
'T is true, some casual knowledge might be gained
Of character or life; but at that time,

[1] Coleridge, to whom The Prelude was addressed.

Of manners put to school I took small note,
And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere.
Far better had it been to exalt the mind
By solitary study, to uphold
Intense desire through meditative peace;
And yet, for chastisement of these regrets,
The memory of one particular hour
Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a throng
Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons staid,
A medley of all tempers, I had passed
The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,
With din of instruments and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
And unaimed prattle flying up and down;
Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,
And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,
The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky
Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse
And open field, through which the pathway wound,
And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld — in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn —
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.

BOOK VI

[Lines 42–65]

The Poet's soul was with me at that time;
Sweet meditations, the still overflow
Of present happiness, while future years
Lacked not anticipations, tender dreams,
No few of which have since been realised;
And some remain, hopes for my future life.
Four years and thirty, told this very week,
Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
By sorrow not unsmitten; yet for me
Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills,
Her dew is on the flowers. Those were the days
Which also first emboldened me to trust
With firmness, hitherto but slightly touched
By such a daring thought, that I might leave
Some monument behind me which pure hearts
Should reverence. The instinctive humbleness,
Maintained even by the very name and thought
Of printed books and authorship, began
To melt away; and further, the dread awe
Of mighty names was softened down and seemed
Approachable, admitting fellowship
Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,
Though not familiarly, my mind put on,
Content to observe, to achieve, and to enjoy.

BOOK VI

[Lines 557–640]

Yet still in me with those soft luxuries
Mixed something of stern mood, an underthirst
Of vigour seldom utterly allayed:
And from that source how different a sadness
Would issue, let one incident make known.
When from the Vallais we had turned, and clomb
Along the Simplon's steep and rugged road,
Following a band of muleteers, we reached
A halting-place, where all together took
Their noon-tide meal. Hastily rose our guide,
Leaving us at the board; awhile we lingered,

Then paced the beaten downward way that led
Right to a rough stream's edge, and there broke off;
The only track now visible was one
That from the torrent's further brink held forth
Conspicuous invitation to ascend
A lofty mountain. After brief delay
Crossing the unbridged stream, that road we took,
And clomb with eagerness, till anxious fears
Intruded, for we failed to overtake
Our comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,
While every moment added doubt to doubt,
A peasant met us, from whose mouth we learned
That to the spot which had perplexed us first
We must descend, and there should find the road,
Which in the stony channel of the stream
Lay a few steps, and then along its banks;
And, that our future course, all plain to sight,
Was downwards, with the current of that stream.
Loth to believe what we so grieved to hear,
For still we had hopes that pointed to the clouds,
We questioned him again, and yet again;
But every word that from the peasant's lips
Came in reply, translated by our feelings,
Ended in this, — *that we had crossed the Alps.*

Imagination — here the Power so called
Through sad incompetence of human speech,
That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;
Halted without an effort to break through;
But to my conscious soul I now can say —
"I recognise thy glory:" in such strength
Of usurpation, when the light of sense
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
There harbours; whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.
Under such banners militant, the soul
Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils
That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts
That are their own perfection and reward,
Strong in herself and in beatitude
That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds
To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain.

The melancholy slackening that ensued
Upon those tidings by the peasant given
Was soon dislodged. Downwards we hurried fast,
And, with the half-shaped road which we had missed,
Entered a narrow chasm. The brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy strait,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow pace. The immeasurable heights
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light —
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

BOOK VIII

[Lines 340–364]

Yet deem not, Friend! that human kind with me
Thus early took a place pre-eminent;
Nature herself was, at this unripe time,
But secondary to my own pursuits
And animal activities, and all
Their trivial pleasures; and when these had drooped
And gradually expired, and Nature, prized
For her own sake, became my joy, even then —
And upwards through late youth, until not less
Than two-and-twenty summers had been told —
Was Man in my affections and regards
Subordinate to her, her visible forms
And viewless agencies: a passion, she,
A rapture often, and immediate love
Ever at hand; he, only a delight
Occasional, an accidental grace,
His hour being not yet come. Far less had then
The inferior creatures, beast or bird, attuned
My spirit to that gentleness of love,
(Though they had long been carefully observed),
Won from me those minute obeisances
Of tenderness, which I may number now
With my first blessings. Nevertheless, on these
The light of beauty did not fall in vain,
Or grandeur circumfuse them to no end.

BOOK XIV

[Lines 1–129]

CONCLUSION

In one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance!) through the Northern tracts
Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the sun
Rise, from the top of Snowdon. To the door
Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
We came, and roused the shepherd who attends
The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;
Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth.

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,
And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked
Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags,
Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased
His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it seemed
In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I panted up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,
Ascending at loose distance each from each,
And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band;
When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up
The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,

Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none
Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift —
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place —
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

When into air had partially dissolved
That vision, given to spirits of the night
And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought
Reflected, it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts
And its possessions, what it has and craves,
What in itself it is, and would become.
There I beheld the emblem of a mind
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege.
One function, above all, of such a mind
Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,
'Mid circumstances awful and sublime,
That mutual domination which she loves
To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed
With interchangeable supremacy,
That men, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive,
And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all
Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their own.

This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe:
They from their native selves can send abroad
Kindred mutations; for themselves create
A like existence; and, whene'er it dawns
Created for them, catch it, or are caught
By its inevitable mastery,
Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound
Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.
Them the enduring and the transient both
Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things
From least suggestions; ever on the watch,
Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
They need not extraordinary calls
To rouse them; in a world of life they live,
By sensible impressions not enthralled,
But by their quickening impulse made more prompt
To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,
And with the generations of mankind
Spread over time, past, present, and to come,
Age after age, till Time shall be no more.
Such minds are truly from the Deity,
For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss
That flesh can know is theirs — the consciousness
Of Whom they are, habitually infused
Through every image and through every thought,
And all affections by communion raised
From earth to heaven, from human to divine;
Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
Whether discursive or intuitive;
Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,
Emotions which best foresight need not fear,
Most worthy then of trust when most intense.
Hence, amid ills that vex and wrongs that crush
Our hearts — if here the words of Holy Writ
May with fit reverence be applied — that peace
Which passeth understanding, that repose
In moral judgments which from this pure source
Must come, or will by man be sought in vain.

## MICHAEL

### A PASTORAL POEM

[Publ. 1800]

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story — unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills — what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.
His days had not been passed in singleness.

His Helpmate was a comely matron, old —
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old, — in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.
Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn — and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.
Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear —
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all —
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use

Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.
And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.
But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations — things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?
Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up!
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.
While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,

There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him; — but
'T were better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman — he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade — and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"
At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There 's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy — at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor.
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed: — "Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
— We have enough — I wish indeed that I
Were younger; — but this hope is a good hope.
— Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
— If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose —
None to remember — do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel

Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him: —
"My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 't will do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of. —— After thou
First cam'st into the world — as oft befalls
To new-born infants — thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so — I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
— Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived:
But, 't is a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
— It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."
At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone —

Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope; — we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale; — do thou thy part;
I will do mine. — I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face. — Heaven bless thee, boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so — yes — yes —
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us! — But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well —
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'T will be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."
The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
— Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell: — with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.
A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'T will make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'T is not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man — and 't is believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.

The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
Is gone — the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood: — yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

## "MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD"

[Publ. 1807]

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

## RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

[Publ. 1807]

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. This old Man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's, at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the Fell.

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops; — on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor,
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness — and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me —
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;

But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed
at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-
side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency
and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had
striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore
grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and
whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a
shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor
dead,
Nor all asleep — in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame
had cast.

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale
face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they
call
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glori-
ous day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly
drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid
eyes,

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest —
Choice word and measured phrase, above
the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man
their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor
to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice
or chance,
And in this way he gained an honest main-
tenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could
I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem

Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
— Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus above his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech — all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!"

## COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802

[Publ. 1807]

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

## COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST 1802

[Publ. 1807]

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country! — on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! — I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

## "IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE"

[Publ. 1807]

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

## ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

[Publ. 1807]

Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

## TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

[Publ. 1807]

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There 's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

## IN LONDON, September 1802

[Publ. 1807]

This was written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France. . . .

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom! — We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

## LONDON, 1802

[Publ. 1807]

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;

And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

## "IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

[Publ. 1807]

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held. — In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

## "WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY"

[Publ. 1807]

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country! — am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men:
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

## TO THE DAISY

[Publ. 1807]

Bright Flower! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

## THE GREEN LINNET

[Publ. 1807]

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:

Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

## STEPPING WESTWARD

[Publ. 1807]

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"

"*What, you are stepping westward?*"—
"*Yea.*"
—'T would be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny:
I liked the greeting; 't was a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

## THE SOLITARY REAPER

[Publ. 1807]

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—

I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

## YARROW UNVISITED

[Publ. 1807]

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning

"Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!—"

From Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
"Whate'er betide, we 'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 't is their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There 's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There 's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What 's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
— Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We 'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There 's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We 'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we 're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'T will soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

## TO THE CUCKOO

[Publ. 1807]

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

## "SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"

[Publ. 1807]

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

## "I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"

[Publ. 1807]

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The Daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

## ODE TO DUTY

[Publ. 1807]

This ode is on the model of Gray's Ode to Adversity, which is copied from Horace's Ode to Fortune. Many and many a time have I been twitted by my wife and sister for having forgotten this dedication of myself to the stern lawgiver. Transgressor indeed I have been, from hour to hour, from day to day: I would

fain hope, however, not more flagrantly or in a worse way than most of my tuneful brethren. But these last words are in a wrong strain. We should be rigorous to ourselves and forbearing, if not indulgent, to others, and, if we make comparisons at all, it ought to be with those who have morally excelled us.

"Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim."

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

## FIDELITY

[Publ. 1807]

The young man whose death gave occasion to this poem was named Charles Gough, and had come early in the spring to Paterdale for the sake of angling. While attempting to cross over Helvellyn to Grasmere he slipped from a steep part of the rock where the ice was not thawed, and perished. His body was discovered as is told in this poem. Walter Scott heard of the accident, and both he and I, without either of us knowing that the other had taken up the subject, each wrote a poem in admiration of the dog's fidelity. His contains a most beautiful stanza: —

"How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber,
When the wind waved his garment how oft didst thou start."

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts — and searches with his eyes
Among the scattered rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.

The Dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:

Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear;
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December's snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere;
Thither the rainbow comes — the cloud —
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The Shepherd stood; then makes his way
O'er rocks and stones, following the Dog
As quickly as he may;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground;
The appalled Discoverer with a sigh
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The Man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the Shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear:
He instantly recalled the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;
Remembered, too, the very day
On which the Traveller passed this way.

But hear a wonder, for whose sake
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.
The Dog which still was hovering nigh,
Repeating the same timid cry,
This Dog had been through three months' space
A dweller in that savage place.

Yes, proof was plain that, since the day
When this ill-fated Traveller died,
The Dog had watched about the spot,
Or by his master's side:
How nourished here through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime;
And gave that strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate!

## CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

[Publ. 1807]

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
— It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower,
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable — because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
— 'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,

He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
— Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
— He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love: —
'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity, —
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not —
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name —
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

## "NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM"

[Publ. 1807]

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, into which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 't was pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

## COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE

[Publ. 1820]

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.

Is it a mirror? — or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires? — But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
"Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

## "THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON"

[Publ. 1807]

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I 'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

## "WHERE LIES THE LAND TO WHICH YON SHIP MUST GO?"

[Publ. 1807]

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry? — Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

## ODE

## INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

[Publ. 1807]

This was composed during my residence at Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere —

> "A simple child,
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death!" —

But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines —

> "Obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings;" etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate

such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.

"The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there 's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, —
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest —
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast: —
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,

Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

## GIPSIES

[Publ. 1807]

Yet are they here the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
Men, women, children, yea the frame
Of the whole spectacle the same!
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
— Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are gone, while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
Much witnessing of change and cheer,
Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary Sun betook himself to rest; —
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
Outshining like a visible God
The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,
Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them — but they
Regard not her: — oh better wrong and strife
(By nature transient) than this torpid life;
Life which the very stars reprove
As on their silent tasks they move!
Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
In scorn I speak not; — they are what their birth
And breeding suffer them to be;
Wild outcasts of society!

## SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

[Publ. 1807]

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song. —
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long: —
"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended. —
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

They came with banner, spear, and shield,
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood —
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

How glad is Skipton at this hour —
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon — though the sleep
Of years be on her! — She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.

Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower: —
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer —
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born —
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
— Yonder is a man in sight —
Yonder is a house — but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say:
'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'

Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
— Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;

Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.
A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
— Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
— Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls; —
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance —
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield —
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed,
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.
In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.
Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

## THE EXCURSION

[Written 1795–1814. Publ. 1814]

TO THE RIGHT HON.
WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K. G.
ETC. ETC.

OFT, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
— Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favour; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND.
*July* 29, 1814.

### PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to

consist of three parts. — The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which "The Excursion" is a part, derives its title of "The Recluse."— Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, "The Recluse"; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement. — The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen. — Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of "The Recluse" will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part ("The Excursion") the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

## BOOK I

### [Lines 463-916]

My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot
Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
Where sate the old Man on the cottage-bench;
And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,
Thus did he speak. "I see around me here
Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon
Even of the good is no memorial left.
— The Poets, in their elegies and songs
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams, to mourn,
And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,
In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness; and they ministered
To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,
Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied

The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject only
To the soft handling of the elements:
There let it lie — how foolish are such thoughts!
Forgive them; — never — never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oh, Sir! the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring; and no one came
But he was welcome; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave.
I speak," continued he, "of One whose stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lonely roof.
She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass, — in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished. — They who passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war:
This happy Land was stricken to the heart!
A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
The hardships of that season: many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not. Meanwhile, abridged
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous years
With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,
When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long; and, when his strength returned,
He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age,
Was all consumed. A second infant now
Was added to the troubles of a time
Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow; shoals of artisans
From ill-requited labour turned adrift
Sought daily bread from public charity,
They, and their wives and children — happier far
Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks!

A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,

This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them; or with his knife
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks —
Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
He mingled, where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not; his good humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work — and to the town
Would turn without an errand his slack steps;
Or wander here and there among the fields.
One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
And with a cruel tongue: at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:
And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. 'Every smile,'
Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
'Made my heart bleed.'"
At this the Wanderer paused;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, "'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
With tuneful hum is filling all the air;
Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek?
Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
And in the weakness of humanity,
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears;
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?"

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection; and that simple tale
Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor Woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye
So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now relaxed,
A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins;
I rose; and, having left the breezy shade,
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,
That had not cheered me long — ere, looking round
Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
He would resume his story.
He replied,
"It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
A momentary pleasure, never marked
By reason, barren of all future good.
But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
A power to virtue friendly; were 't not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed
An idle dreamer! 'Tis a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form. — But without further bidding
I will proceed.
While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessèd home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote;
And when these lofty elms once more appeared,

What pleasant expectations lured me on
O'er the flat Common! — With quick step I reached
The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch;
But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me
A little while; then turned her head away
Speechless, — and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
She rose from off her seat, and then, — O Sir!
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name: —
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
If I had seen her husband. As she spake
A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
Nor had I power to answer ere she told
That he had disappeared — not two months gone.
He left his house: two wretched days had past,
And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
She opened — found no writing, but beheld
Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
Silver and gold. 'I shuddered at the sight,'
Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there; and ere that day
Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been sent
With the sad news, that he had joined a troop
Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
— He left me thus — he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and sink
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'
This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted. — 'T was the time of early spring;
I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the 'trotting brooks' and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
And disappeared.
I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat
Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look, — only, it seemed,
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew,
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,

And strolled into her garden. It appeared
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift
Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled
O'er paths they used to deck: carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads, wanting support.
The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
And dragged them to the earth.
Ere this an hour
Was wasted. — Back I turned my restless steps;
A stranger passed; and, guessing whom I sought,
He said that she was used to ramble far. —
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud;
Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
The voice was silent. From the bench I rose;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate —
The longer I remained, more desolate:
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,
With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms; the cottage-clock struck eight; —
I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin — her figure, too,
Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
'It grieves me you have waited here so long,
But, in good truth, I 've wandered much of late;
And sometimes — to my shame I speak — have need
Of my best prayers to bring me back again.
While on the board she spread our evening meal,
She told me — interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless hands —
That she had parted with her elder child,
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed. — 'I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
I have been travelling far; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
And to myself,' said she, 'have done much wrong
And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my tears
Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that God
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.'
It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear
'T is long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman: — so familiarly
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on One
By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved
Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were cast;
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind

Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
Which with a look of welcome she received;
And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
With the best hope and comfort I could give:
She thanked me for my wish; — but for my hope
It seemed she did not thank me.
I returned,
And took my rounds along this road again
When on its sunny bank the primrose flower
Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
I found her sad and drooping: she had learned
No tidings of her husband; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
In person and appearance; but her house
Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence;
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
Had from his Mother caught the trick of grief,
And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
And once again entering the garden saw,
More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass:
No ridges there appeared of clear black mould,
No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
It seemed the better part was gnawed away
Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender stem
Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
— Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.' When to the House
We had returned together, she enquired
If I had any hope: — but for her babe
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must die
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place; his Sunday garments hung
Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.
And when,
In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds, and gained,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself;
And for this end had hired a neighbour's boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then —
Our final parting; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned
Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years;
From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my Friend,
That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day;
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint, — the grass has crept o'er its grey line;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task; and she with faltering voice
Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully;
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend, —
In sickness she remained; and here she died;
Last human tenant of these ruined walls!"

BOOK VII

[Lines 395–481]

Almost at the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches towards me, like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the greensward; there, beneath
A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies,
From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul;
And this deep mountain-valley was to him
Soundless, with all its streams. The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
With startling summons; not for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture: evermore
Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved.
Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side

Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed;
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not: neither field nor flock he owned:
No wish for wealth had place within his mind;
Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or care.

Though born a younger brother, need was none
That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart, to plant himself anew.
And when, mature in manhood, he beheld
His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him; but he remained well pleased,
By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family;
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
— Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
That pressed upon his brother's house; for books
Were ready comrades whom he could not tire;
Of whose society the blameless Man
Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
Even to old age, with unabated charm
Beguiled his leisure hours; refreshed his thoughts;
Beyond its natural elevation raised
His introverted spirit; and bestowed
Upon his life an outward dignity
Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,
The stormy day, each had its own resource;
Song of the muses, sage historic tale,
Science severe, or word of holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of just men
Made perfect, and from injury secure.
— Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint:
And they, who were about him, did not fail
In reverence, or in courtesy; they prized
His gentle manners: and his peaceful smiles,
The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
Were met with answering sympathy and love.

At length, when sixty years and five were told,
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature: and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
— Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.
— And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;
And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

## YARROW VISITED

### September 1814

And is this — Yarrow? — *This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why? — a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.

And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice —
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!

Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there —
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see — but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives —
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine —
Sad thought which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me — to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

## TO A SKY-LARK

[Publ. 1827]

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

## "SCORN NOT THE SONNET"

[Publ. 1827]

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few!

## YARROW REVISITED

TO
SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.,

AS A TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP,
AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS,
THESE MEMORIALS ARE AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED

[Publ. 1835]

The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford, for Naples.

The title "Yarrow Revisited" will stand in no need of explanation for Readers acquainted with the Author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated Stream.

The gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly, —
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;
If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps — a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O Scott! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age
With Strength, her venturous brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised Romance
Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears — made sport
For fanciful dejections:
Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is — our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the "last Minstrel," (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

## THE TROSACHS

[Publ. 1835]

THERE 'S not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

## "IF THIS GREAT WORLD OF JOY AND PAIN"

[Publ. 1835]

IF this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track;
If freedom, set, will rise again,
And virtue, flown, come back;
Woe to the purblind crew who fill
The heart with each day's care;
Nor gain, from past or future, skill
To bear, and to forbear!

# SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

## THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

### IN SEVEN PARTS

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus. —T. Burnet, *Archæol. Phil.* p. 68.

### ARGUMENT

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country. [1798.]

### PART I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye —
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon —"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow

Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us thro'!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine."

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus! —
Why look'st thou so?" — "With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

## PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'T was right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line. The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'T was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

## PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried. A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy;

And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all aflame,
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!

Are those her sails that glance
in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.

Are those her ribs through which
the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
The Spectre-Woman and her death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship.

And is that Woman all her
crew?
Is that a Death? and are there
two?
Like vessel, like crew!

Is Death that Woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks
were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death
was she,
Who thicks man's blood with
cold.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won!
I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars
rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the
sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising of the Moon,

We listened and looked side-
ways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick
the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp
gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one
bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged
Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a
ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His ship-mates drop down dead.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless
lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner

The souls did from their bodies
fly, —
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me
by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

## PART IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him;

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and
brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.[1]

I fear thee and thy glittering
eye,
And thy skinny hand, so
brown."—

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

"Fear not, fear not, thou Wed-
ding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy
things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to
pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and
made
My heart as dry as dust.

[1] For the last two lines of this stanza, I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned, and in part composed. [Note of S. T. C.]

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and their happiness.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:

He blesseth them in his heart.

Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell begins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

## PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life;
And a hundred fire-flags sheen;

To and fro they were hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on;

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

But not by the souls of the men, nor

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!

by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint

'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned — they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are;
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased: yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome Spirit from the south pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.

the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion —
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

## PART VI

### FIRST VOICE

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

### SECOND VOICE

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

### FIRST VOICE

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance: for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

### SECOND VOICE

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'T was night, calm night, the Moon was high,
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

And appear in their own forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;
This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He 'll shrieve my soul, he 'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

## PART VII

The Hermit of the Wood,

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.

How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said —
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look —
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared' — 'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company! —

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small:
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

## LOVE

[Publ. 1798]

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leant against the armèd man,
The statue of the armèd knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story —
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade, —

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land.

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain —
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay; —

His dying words — but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faultering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity.

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love and virgin-shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved — she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stepped —
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'T was partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 't was a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

## THE NIGHTINGALE

### A CONVERSATION POEM, WRITTEN IN APRIL 1798

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge.
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
"Most musical, most melancholy" bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh idle thought!
In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! fill'd all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain:
And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretched his limbs

Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature! But 't will not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance! 'T is the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music!

And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many nightingales; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
They answer and provoke each other's songs,
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all —
Stirring the air with such an harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
Whose dewy leaflets are but half-disclosed,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
(Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
To something more than Nature in the grove)
Glides through the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft, a moment's space,
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon
Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
With one sensation, and those wakeful birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if some sudden gale had swept at once
A hundred airy harps! And she hath watched
Many a nightingale perch giddily
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song
Like tipsy joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler! till to-morrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes. — That strain again!
Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's play-mate. He knows well
The evening-star; and once, when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream),
I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam!
Well! —

It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy. — Once more, farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends! farewell.

## CHRISTABEL

### PART THE FIRST

[Written 1797; publ. 1816]

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu — whit! —— Tu — whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew!

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'T is a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that 's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And nought was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell. —
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 't was frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel,) And who art thou?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet: —
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!
Said Christabel, How camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet: —

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell —
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate,
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And jealous of the listening air
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!

And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?
Christabel answered — Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

But soon with altered voice, said she —
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine —
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue —
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride —
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake —
"All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, So let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side —
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the Maiden's side! —
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah wel-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!

Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree;
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale —
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is —
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine —
Thou 'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu — whoo! tu — whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds —
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep,
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 't is but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 't were,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

PART THE SECOND

[Written 1800]

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke — a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,

Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side —
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinn'd!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.
So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.
The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted — ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining —
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court — that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he
kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his
friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw
again —
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.
The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said — His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.
Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.
"Nay!
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

"And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free —
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And, by mine honour! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine! —
— For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing;
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warn'd by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name —
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.

"And in my dream, methought, I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!

I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away —
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel ——
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she look'd askance! —
One moment — and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees — no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise,
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view ——
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue!
And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said: and more she could not say:
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O, by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
Dishonour'd thus in his old age;
Dishonour'd by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end —
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere —
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 't is pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 't is tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it 's most used to do.

## KUBLA KHAN

[Written 1797; publ. 1816]

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced,
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 't would win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

## HYMN BEFORE SUN-RISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form!

Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my Thought,
Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing — there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the Vale!
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shattered and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?
Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain —
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet? —
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene

Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast —
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me — Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense from the Earth!
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

## FROST AT MIDNIGHT

[Publ. 1798]

THE Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud — and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film which fluttered on the grate
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, everywhere
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering *stranger!* and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores

And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.
Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

## DEJECTION: AN ODE

[Written April 4, 1802]

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arm:
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.
*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.*

I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread,
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle wooed,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!

And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth —
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud —
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud —
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits and foliage not my own seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man —
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule with worse than wintry song
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'T is of the rushing of an host in rout,
With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds —
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings — all is over —
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,

'T is of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII

'T is midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

## YOUTH AND AGE

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee —
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!

*When* I was young? — Ah, woful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
How lightly *then* it flashed along: —
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in 't together.
Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!

*Ere* I was old? Ah woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth 's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
'T is known, that Thou and I were one,
I 'll think it but a fond conceit —
It cannot be that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd: —
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!
Where no hope is, life 's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
When we are old:
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismist;
Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

## WORK WITHOUT HOPE

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRUARY, 1827

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair —
The bees are stirring — birds are on the wing —
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

## EPITAPH

Stop, Christian passer-by! — Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he. —
O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.;
That he who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death!
Mercy for praise, to be forgiven for fame
He asked, and hoped, through Christ. Do thou the same!

# SIR WALTER SCOTT

## THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

[Publ. January, 1805]

*Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno, Me quoque qui feci judice, digna lini.*

---

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR

---

### INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His withered cheek and tresses gray
Seemed to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He carrolled, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.
He passed where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh.
With hesitating step at last
The embattled portal arch he passed,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtained;
The aged Minstrel audience gained.
But when he reached the room of state
Where she with all her ladies sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain

Came wildering o'er his aged brain —
He tried to tune his harp in vain,
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had played it to King Charles the Good
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wished, yet feared, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face and smiled;
And lightened up his faded eye
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot;
Cold diffidence and age's frost
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'T was thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

## CANTO SIXTH

I

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim, —
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

II

O Caledonia, stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now and what hath been,
Seems as to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot-stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The bard may draw his parting groan.

III

Not scorned like me, to Branksome Hall
The minstrels came at festive call;
Trooping they came from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now for every merry mate
Rose the portcullis' iron grate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendor of the spousal rite,
How mustered in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furred with miniver;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound:
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek,
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh,
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she feared each holy place.
False slanders these: — I trust right well,
She wrought not by forbidden spell,
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour;
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part
Who tamper with such dangerous art.
But this for faithful truth I say, —
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroidered and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI

The spousal rites were ended soon;
'T was now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshalled the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,
And cygnet from Saint Mary's wave,
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
Loudly they spoke and loudly laughed;
Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
The clamor joined with whistling scream,
And flapped their wings and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humor highly crossed
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote with his gauntlet stout Hunthill,
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-Sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose;
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove and shook his head.
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drenched in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found:
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 't was said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII

The dwarf, who feared his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revelled as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn there did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merrymen sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
'A deep carouse to yon fair bride!'
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foamed forth in floods the nut-brown ale,
While shout the riders every one;
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remembered him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest

With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dashed from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venomed wound and festering joint
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
And board and flagons overturned.
Riot and clamor wild began;
Back to the hall the urchin ran,
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinned, and muttered, 'Lost! lost! lost!'

X

By this, the dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the minstrels tune their lay.
And first stepped forth old Albert Græme,
The minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well
Within the Land Debatable;
Well friended too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made their broth
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI

ALBERT GRÆME

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.
For she had lands both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all.

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;—
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.
Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port,
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay
Renowned in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV

They sought together climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stayed,
And deemed that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV

Fitztraver, O, what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,

When Surrey of the deathless lay
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp called wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades and courtly bowers,
And, faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favorite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI

FITZTRAVER

'T was All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised by his art
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark if still she loved and still she thought of him.

XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might,
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright;
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watch-light by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX

Fair all the pageant — but how passing fair
The slender form which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And pensive read from tablet eburnine
Some strain that seemed her inmost soul to find:
That favored strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form the Lady Geraldine.

XX

Slow rolled the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away —
So royal envy rolled the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plundered shrine,
The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI

Both Scots and Southern chiefs prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith.
Then from his seat with lofty air
Rose Harold, bard of brave Saint Clair, —
Saint Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;

Where erst Saint Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay; —
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall! —
Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave,
And watched the whilst, with visage pale
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might Fancy cull;
For thither came in times afar
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
Skilled to prepare the raven's food,
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave;
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale,
And many a Runic column high
Had witnessed grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold in his youth
Learned many a Saga's rhyme uncouth, —
Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curled,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
Of those dread Maids whose hideous yell
Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of chiefs who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learned a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mixed with the softer numbers well.

XXIII

HAROLD

O, listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

'Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

'The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water Sprite,
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

'Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch:
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?'

''T is not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

''T is not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 't is not filled by Rosabelle.'

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'T was broader than the watch-fire light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copsewood glen;
'T was seen from Dreyden's groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie,
Each baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair —
So still they blaze when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high Saint Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold —
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each Saint Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung and the wild winds sung
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce marked the guests the darkened hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all.
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drained by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbor's face,
Could scarce his own stretched hand behold.
A secret horror checked the feast,
And chilled the soul of every guest;
Even the high dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elfish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, muttered, 'Found! found! found!'

XXV

Then sudden through the darkened air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seemed on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall:
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
And filled the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elfish page it broke.
It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud, —
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elfish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some
Cry, with loud summons, 'GYLBIN, COME!'
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimmed each lofty look.
But none of all the astonished train
Was so dismayed as Deloraine:
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'T was feared his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
At length by fits he darkly told,
With broken hint and shuddering cold,
That he had seen right certainly
*A shape with amice wrapped around,*
*With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,*
*Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;*
And knew — but how it mattered not —
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale:
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to Saint Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.
Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some blest saint his prayers addressed:
Some to Saint Modan made their vows,
Some to Saint Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to Our Lady of the Isle;
Each did his patron witness make
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en and prayers were prayed,
'T is said the noble dame, dismayed,
Renounced for aye dark magic's aid.

XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene 't were vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthened row:
No lordly look nor martial stride,
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
To the high altar's hallowed side,
And there they knelt them down.
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the lettered stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnished niche around
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frowned.

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper and host and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourished fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred abbot stretched his hand,
And blessed them as they kneeled;
With holy cross he signed them all,
And prayed they might be sage in hall
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells tolled out their mighty peal
For the departed spirit's weal;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burden of the song,
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA,
While the pealing-organ rung.
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy fathers sung:

HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?
When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll,
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

O, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

---

HUSHED is the harp — the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No: close beneath proud Newark's tower
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower,
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begged before.
So passed the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath,
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

# THE LADY OF THE LAKE

[Publ. May, 1810]

TO

THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES, MARQUIS OF ABERCORN

&C., &C., &C.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR

ARGUMENT

THE scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

## CANTO FIRST

### THE CHASE

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,—
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
'To arms! the foeman storm the wall,'
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;

Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III

Yelled on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern where, 't is told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain-side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood gray
That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
With flying foot the heath he spurned,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith, —
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew: —
But thundering as he came prepared,

With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touched with pity and remorse,
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
'I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!'

X

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day,
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

XI

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower
Found in each clift a narrow bower;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim

As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb with footing nice
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down to the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed;
And, 'What a scene were here,' he cried,
'For princely pomp or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide on the lake the lingering morn!
How sweet at eve the lover's lute
Chime when the groves were still and mute!
And when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell!
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered stranger call
To friendly feast and lighted hall.

XVI

'Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now — beshrew yon nimble deer —
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place: —
A summer night in greenwood spent
Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer. —
I am alone; — my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried.'

XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touched this silver strand
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,

And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown, —
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace, —
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue, —
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine in her mirror blue
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unrevealed
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame; —
O, need I tell that passion's name?

XX

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne: —
'Father!' she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came; —
'Malcolm, was thine the blast?' the name
Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
'A stranger I,' the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar
Pushed her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen; —
So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armor trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy,
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command.

XXII

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
'Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you;

On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer.' —
'Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred,' he said;
'No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land!' —

XXIII

'I well believe,' the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side, —
'I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight, —
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
That tasselled horn so gayly gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.'

XXIV

The stranger smiled: — 'Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me first the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide.'
The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasped an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV

The stranger viewed the shore around;
'T was all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain maiden showed
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees overhead
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favored flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she stayed,
And gayly to the stranger said:
'On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!'

XXVII

'My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee!' —

He crossed the threshold, — and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
When on the floor he saw displayed,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusked trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
That blackening streaks of blood retained,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised: —
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
'I never knew but one,' he said,
'Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.'
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:
'You see the guardian champion's sword;
As light it trembles in his hand
As in my grasp a hazel wand:
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart,
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.'

XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names,
'The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here.'

XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well showed the elder lady's mien
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race.
'T were strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turned all inquiry light away: —
'Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'T is thus our charmed rhymes we sing.'
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Filled up the symphony between.

XXXI

SONG

'Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,

Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

'No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang of war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here 's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.'

XXXII

She paused, — then, blushing, led the lay,
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED

'Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep ! the deer is in his den;
Sleep ! thy hounds are by thee lying:
Sleep ! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.'

XXXIII

The hall was cleared, — the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honor 's lost.
Then, — from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night ! —
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view, —
O were his senses false or true ?
Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now ?

XXXIV

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore. —
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
Wasted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm;
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse, —
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray !
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,

While thus he communed with his breast: —
'Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more, — by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.'
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Benvenue.

## CANTO FIFTH

### THE COMBAT

I

Fair as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain-side, —
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War.

II

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path! — they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
'T was oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew, —
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange course
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV

'Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell,' the Saxon said,
'I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.

Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep perchance the villain lied.'
'Yet why a second venture try?'
'A warrior thou, and ask me why!—
Moves our free course by such fixed cause
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid;
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone.'

V

'Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?'
'No, by my word;—of bands prepared
To guard King James's sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.'
'Free be they flung! for we were loath
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
But, stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewildered in the mountain-game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?'
'Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlawed desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart.'

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl,
A space he paused, then sternly said,
'And heardst thou why he drew his blade?
Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What recked the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven.'
'Still was it outrage;—yet, 't is true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
While Albany with feeble hand
Held borrowed truncheon of command,
The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain,—
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne.'

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile:
'Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread
For fattened steer or household bread,
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
"To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blade must win the rest."
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
While of ten thousand herds there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share.
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.'

VIII

Answered Fitz-James: 'And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?'

'As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true, —
I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid, —
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury.'
'Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain in lady's bower
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!'

IX

'Have then thy wish!' — He whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James: 'How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon, — I am Roderick Dhu!'

X

Fitz-James was brave: — though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
He manned himself with dauntless air,
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before: —
'Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.'
Sir Roderick marked, — and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foeman worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood — then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair, —
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack;
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold gray stone.

XI

Fitz-James looked round, — yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied:
'Fear nought — nay, that I need not say —
But — doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest; — I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on; — I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue

Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.'
They moved; — I said Fitz-James was brave
As ever knight that belted glaive,
Yet dare not say that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet by fearful proof was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground,
And still from copse and heather deep
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:
'Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here all vantageless I stand,
Armed like thyself with single brand;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.'

XIII

The Saxon paused: 'I ne'er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?' — 'No, stranger, none!
And hear, — to fire thy flagging zeal, —
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead:
"Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife."'
'Then, by my word,' the Saxon said,
'The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff, —
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James at Stirling let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand
That aids thee now to guard thy land.'

XIV

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye:
'Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate; —
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared? — By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valor light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair.'
'I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone! —
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not — doubt not — which thou wilt —

We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.'
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each looked to sun and stream and plain
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot and point and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;
For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showered his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock or castle-roof
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI

'Now yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!'
'Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die.'
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round. —
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
His knee was planted on his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhoped, from desperate strife:
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appeared his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid, —
'Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that faith and valor give.'
With that he blew a bugle note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead
By loosened rein a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James reined up his horse, —
With wonder viewed the bloody spot, —
'Exclaim not, gallants! question not. —
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the gray palfrey bear his weight.
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high: — I must be boune
To see the archer-game at noon:
But lightly Bavard clears the lea. —
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII

'Stand, Bayard, stand!'—the steed obeyed,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armed heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sat erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
His merrymen followed as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith, they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look down.

XIX

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
'Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray,
Who townward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain side?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?'
'No, by my word;—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace'—
'Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'T is James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared.'
Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
They won the Castle's postern gate.

XX

The Douglas who had bent his way
From Cambus-kenneth's abbey gray,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:—
'Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven;—
Be pardoned one repining tear!
For He who gave her knows how dear,
How excellent!—but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.—
Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,

As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I 'll follow to the Castle-park,
And play my prize; — King James shall mark
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft in happier days
His boyish wonder loved to praise.'

XXI

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,
And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the courser's clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
And well the simperer might be vain, —
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims, —
'Long live the Commons' King, King James!'
Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern;
There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burgher's joys disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own gray tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous rout.
There morricers, with bell at heel
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band, —
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might, —
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy, —
No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes, —
Nor called in vain, for Douglas came. —
For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppressed;
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The gray-haired sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,

Who now with anxious wonder scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong.
The old men marked and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamors loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who at the chase
Once held his side the honored place,
Begirt his board, and in the field
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favorite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra, — whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North, —
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The king's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound
In anger struck the noble hound.
The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates that with name
Of Lufra Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI

Then clamored loud the royal train,
And brandished swords and staves amain,
But stern the Baron's warning: 'Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas. — Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doomed of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.' —
'Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!' the Monarch said:
'Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know;
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow and haughty look? —
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward. —
Break off the sports!' — for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows, —
'Break off the sports!' he said and frowned,
'And bid our horsemen clear the ground.'

XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,

And to the leading soldier said:
'Sir John of Hyndford, 't was my blade,
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed permit me then
A word with these misguided men. —

XXVIII

'Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honor, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind
Which knit my country and my kind?
O no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread
For me in kindred gore are red:
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me that mother wails her son,
For me that widow's mate expires,
For me that orphans weep their sires,
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!'

XXIX

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
For blessings on his generous head
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men upon the verge of life
Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resigned his honored charge.

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
'O Lenox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear'st thou,' he said, 'the loud acclaim
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hailed the day
When first I broke the Douglas sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king? —

XXXI

'But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar —
What from our cousin, John of Mar?'
'He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground;
For some foul purpose yet unknown, —
Most sure for evil to the throne, —
The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'T is said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune
To break their muster marched, and soon
Your Grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride.'

XXXII

'Thou warn'st me I have done amiss, —
I should have earlier looked to this;
I lost it in this bustling day. —
Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war;
Roderick this morn in single fight
Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause

Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly!'
He turned his steed, — 'My liege, I hie,
Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.'
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the saddened town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumored feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms; — the Douglas too,
They mourned him pent within the hold,
'Where stout Earl William was of old.' —
And there his word the speaker stayed,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen from the west
At evening to the Castle pressed,
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

## CANTO SIXTH. XIV–XXI

### THE DEATH OF RODERICK DHU

XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
'Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold on festal day,
In yon lone isle, — again where ne'er
Shall harper play or warrior hear! —
That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory. —
Strike it! — and then, — for well thou canst, —
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I 'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray.'
The trembling Bard with awe obeyed, —
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witnessed from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along; —
As shallop launched on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

'The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For ere he parted he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray —
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand! —
There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound,
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams? —
I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero bound for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'T were worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

XVI

'Their light-armed archers far and near
Surveyed the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frowned,
Their barded horsemen in the rear
The stern battalia crowned.
No symbol clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII

'At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from heaven that fell
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply —
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood? —
"Down, down," cried Mar, "your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!" —
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide. —
"We 'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We 'll drive them back as tame."

XVIII

'Bearing before them in their course
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if a hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank, —
"My banner-men, advance!
I see," he cried, "their column shake.
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!" —
The horsemen dashed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne —
Where, where was Roderick then!
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men.
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was poured;
Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanished the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX

'Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within. —
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait,

Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set; — the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes — the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side,
While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eying their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX

'Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried: "Behold yon isle! —
See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'T is there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile; —
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we 'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung,
He plunged him in the wave: —
All saw the deed, — the purpose knew,
And to their clamors Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'T was then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven:
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
In vain. — He nears the isle — and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand: —
It darkened, — but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan; —
Another flash! — the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI

'"Revenge! revenge!" the Saxons cried,
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and from a crag
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
A herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold
Were both, he said, in captive hold.' —
But here the lay made sudden stand,
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand kept feeble time;
That motion ceased, — yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp, — his hands are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
Thus, motionless and moanless drew,

His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu! —
Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

## SONG FROM ROKEBY

[Canto Third. XVI–XVIII]

SONG

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily, —

CHORUS

'O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.'
'If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we
That dwell by dale and down?
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May.'

CHORUS

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.

'I read you, by your bugle horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn
To keep the king's greenwood.'
'A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 't is at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night.'

CHORUS

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!

'With burnished brand and musketoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum.'
'I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS

'And O, though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare
Would reign my Queen of May!

'Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I 'll die;
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I!
And when I 'm with my comrades met
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS

'Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen.'

## HUNTING SONG

[Publ. 1808]

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk and horse and hunting-spear!
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain gray,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming:
And foresters have busy been
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay,
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the green-wood haste away;

We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed;
You shall see him brought to bay,
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman, who can balk,
Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk?
Think of this and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

## JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

AIR — '*A Border Melody*'

[The first stanza is old. The others were added 1816.]

'WHY weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen' —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

'Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen' —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

'A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen.' —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was decked at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmered fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She 's o'er the Border and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

## THE SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL

AIR — '*Rimhin aluin 'stu mo run*'

"It was while struggling with such languor, on one lovely evening of this autumn [1814], that he composed the following beautiful verses. They mark the very spot of their birth, — namely, the then naked height overhanging the northern side of the Cauldshields Loch, from which Melrose Abbey to the eastward, and the hills of Ettrick and Yarrow to the west, are now visible over a wide range of rich woodland, — all the work of the poet's hand." Lockhart's *Life*, chap. XXXIX.

THE sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill
In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore,
Though evening with her richest dye
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain
I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruined pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree —
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas! the warped and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye?
The harp of strained and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply?
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill.

# LORD BYRON

## CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

### A ROMAUNT

[Canto III published 1816. Canto IV published 1818.]

### CANTO THE THIRD

Afin que cette application vous forçât de penser à autre chose : il n'y a en vérité de reméde que celui-là et le tempes. — *Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, Sept.* 7, 1776.

I

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child,
ADA, sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted, — not as now we part,
But with a hope. —
Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me, and on high
The winds lift up their voices : I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

II

Once more upon the waters, yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

III

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life, — where not a flower appears.

IV

Since my young days of passion — joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,
And both may jar; it may be that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling,
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness — so it fling
Forgetfulness around me — it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

VI

'T is to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

VII

Yet must I think less wildly: — I *have* thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poison'd. 'T is too late!
Yet am I changed; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

VIII

Something too much of this: but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last, —
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had alter'd him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb,
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

IX

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deem'd its spring perpetual — but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clank'd not; worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

X

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation, such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

XI

But who can view the ripen'd rose nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?

Harold, once more within the vortex, roll'd
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime.

XII

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man, with whom he held
Little in common; — untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

XIII

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite.
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home.
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 't were wild, — as on the plunder'd wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck, —
Did yet inspire a cheer which he forbore to check.

XVII

Stop! — for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust,
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be; —
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of fields, king-making Victory?

XVIII

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!

How in an hour the power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In 'pride of place' here last the eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
He wears the shatter'd links of the world's broken chain.

XIX

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make *One* submit;
Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?
What! shall reviving Thraldom again be
The patch'd-up idol of enlighten'd days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

XX

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrow'd with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions: all that most endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;—
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII

Did ye not hear it?—No; 't was but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;

And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips — 'The foe! They come! they come!'

XXVI

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering' rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard too have her Saxon foes: —
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave, — alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, — the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse, — friend, foe, — in one red burial blent!

XXIX

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song;
And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along,
Even where the thickest of war's tempest lower'd,
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine young, gallant Howard!

XXX

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring

Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring.

XXXI

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honour'd but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

XXXII

They mourn, but smile at length; and, smiling, mourn:
The tree will wither long before it fall;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness; the ruin'd wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthral;
The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on:

XXXIII

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
Living in shatter'd guise, and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

XXXIV

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison, a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches: for it were
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste. Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life, — say, would he name threescore?

XXXV

The Psalmist number'd out the years of man:
They are enough, and if thy tale be *true*,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say —
'Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!'
And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

XXXVI

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt,
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

XXXVII

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now

That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

XXXVIII

Oh, more or less than man — in high or low,
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy foot-stool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield:
An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skill'd,
Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

XXXIX

Yet well thy soul hath brook'd the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;
When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favourite child,
He stood unbow'd beneath the ills upon him piled.

XL

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
Ambition steel'd thee on too far to show
That just habitual scorn, which could contemn
Men and their thoughts; 't was wise to feel, not so
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use
Till they were turn'd unto thine overthrow:
'T is but a worthless world to win or lose,
So hath it proved to thee and all such lot who choose.

XLI

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had help'd to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,
*Their* admiration thy best weapon shone;
The part of Philip's son was thine, not then
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

XLII

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

XLIII

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
By their contagion, — Conquerors and Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to those they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule.

XLIV

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last;
And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed which runs to waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by,
Which eats into itself and rusts ingloriously.

XLV

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
*Round* him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

XLVI

Away with these! true Wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties, — streams and dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.

XLVII

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying wind,
Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud,
Banners on high, and battles pass'd below;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

XLVIII

Beneath these battlements, within those walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armèd halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors should have,
But History's purchased page to call them great?
A wider space, an ornamented grave?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave.

XLIX

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!
And Love, which lent a blazon to their shields
With emblems well devised by amorous pride,
Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide:
But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on
Keen contest and destruction near allied;
And many a tower for some fair mischief won,
Saw the discolour'd Rhine beneath its ruin run.

L

But Thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever,
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface mow

With the sharp scythe of conflict, — then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream? — that it should Lethe be.

LI

A thousand battles have assail'd thy banks,
But these and half their fame have pass'd away,
And Slaughter heap'd on high his weltering ranks;
Their very graves are gone, and what are they?
Thy tide wash'd down the blood of yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
Glass'd with its dancing light the sunny ray;
But o'er the blacken'd memory's blighting dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem.

LII

Thus Harold inly said, and pass'd along,
Yet not insensibly to all which here
Awoke the jocund birds to early song
In glens which might have made even exile dear.
Though on his brow were graven lines austere,
And tranquil sternness which had ta'en the place
Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
Joy was not always absent from his face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

LIII

Nor was all love shut from him, though his days
Of passion had consumed themselves to dust.
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such as smile upon us; the heart must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though disgust
Hath wean'd it from all wordlings: thus he felt,
For there was soft remembrance, and sweet trust
In one fond breast to which his own would melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

LIV

And he had learn'd to love (I know not why,
For this in such as him seems strange of mood)
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipp'd affections have to grow,
In him this glow'd when all beside had ceased to glow.

LV

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though unwed,
*That* love was pure, and, far above disguise,
Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

1

The castled crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine;
And hills all rich with blossom'd trees,
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scatter'd cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strew'd a scene, which I should see
With double joy wert *thou* with me.

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes
And hands which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
Above, the frequent feudal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of gray;
And many a rock which steeply lowers,
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;

But one thing want these banks of Rhine,—
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

3

I send the lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must wither'd be,
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherish'd them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them, drooping nigh,
And know'st them gather'd by the Rhine,
And offer'd from my heart to thine!

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round:
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine!

LVI

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemy's, — but let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, gush'd from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France whose rights he battled to resume.

LVII

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career, —
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,
The few in number, who had not o'erstept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept.

LVIII

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shatter'd wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did light, —
A tower of victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watch'd along the plain:
But Peace destroy'd what War could never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain,
On which the iron shower for years had pour'd in vain.

LIX

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

LX

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is colour'd by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherish'd gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine,
'T is with the thankful glance of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise, more glaring shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft, — the glories of old days,

LXI

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,

The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,
The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets been
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall.

LXIII

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche — the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

LXIV

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be pass'd in vain, —
Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquer'd on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeath'd his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument; — the Stygian coast
Unsepulchred they roam'd, and shriek'd each wandering ghost.

LXIV

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely cause
Of vice-entail'd Corruption: they no land
Doom'd to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

LXV

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days;
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewildered gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levell'd Aventicum, hath strew'd her subject lands.

LXVI

And there — oh! sweet and sacred be the name! —
Julia, the daughter, the devoted, gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was just,
And then she died on him she could not save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one heart, one dust.

LXVII

But these are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither, though the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

LXVIII

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue.
There is too much of man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me in their fold.

LXIX

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

LXX

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea,
The boldest steer but where their ports invite,
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be.

LXXI

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear?

LXXII

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

LXXIII

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

LXXIV

And when at length the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

LXXV

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not contemn
All objects, if compared with these? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?

LXXVI

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One whose dust was once all fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while (a passing guest,
Where he became a being) whose desire
Was to be glorious; — 't was a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep he sacrificed all rest.

LXXVII

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

LXXVIII

His love was passion's essence — as a tree
On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus, and enamour'd, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distemper'd though it seems.

LXXIX

*This* breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
Invested her with all that 's wild and sweet;
This hallow'd, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fever'd lip would greet,
From hers who but with friendship his would meet;
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devouring heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possest.

LXXX

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banish'd; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was phrensied, — wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was phrensied by disease or woe
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

LXXXI

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more:
Did he not this for France, which lay before
Bow'd to the inborn tyranny of years?

Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers
Roused up to too much wrath, which follows o'ergrown fears?

LXXXII

They made themselves a fearful monument!
The wreck of old opinions, things which grew,
Breathed from the birth of time: the veil they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour re-fill'd
As heretofore because ambition was self-will'd.

LXXXIII

But this will not endure, nor be endured;
Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt!
They might have used it better, but, allured
By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt
On one another; pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they,
Who in oppression's darkness caved had dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourish'd with the day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

LXXXIV

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes and have been vanquish'd, bear
Silence, but not submission. In his lair
Fix'd Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came, it cometh, and will come, — the power
To punish or forgive — in *one* we shall be slower.

LXXXV

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me with its stillness to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more;—

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;—
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

LXXXVIII

Ye stars, which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires, — 'tis to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

LXXXIX

All heaven and earth are still — though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: —
All heaven and earth are still. From the high host
Of stars to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentred in a life intense,
Where not a beam nor air nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty; — 'twould disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak
Upreard of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy pray'r!

XCII

The sky is changed! — and such a change! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps who call to her aloud!

XCIII

And this is in the night: — Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black, — and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted!
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage

Which blighted their life's bloom and then departed —
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters, war within themselves to wage: —

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around. Of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath fork'd
His lightnings, as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurk'd.

XCVI

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye,
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless, — if I rest.
But where of ye, oh tempests, is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast,
Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some high nest?

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me, — could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel and yet breathe — into *one* word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;

But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

XCVIII

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contain'd no tomb, —
And glowing into day. We may resume
The march of our existence; and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much that may give us pause if ponder'd fittingly.

XCIX

Clarens, sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought,
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above,
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And sunset into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then mocks.

C

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod, —
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains; where the god
Is a pervading life and light, — so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

CI

All things are here of *him;* from the black pines
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bow'd waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the wood,
The covert of old trees with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him and his a populous solitude, —

CII

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
And fairy-form'd and many-colour'd things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

CIII

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who knows
That tender mystery, will love the more,
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes
And the world's waste have driven him far from those,
For 't is his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays or grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights in its eternity!

CIV

'T was not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which passion must allot
To the mind's purified beings; 't was the ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallow'd it with loveliness. 'T is lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have rear'd a throne.

CV

Lausanne and Ferney, ye have been the abodes
Of names which unto you bequeath'd a name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder and the flame
Of Heaven, again assail'd, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign do more than smile.

CVI

The one was fire and fickleness, a child,
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various, — gay, grave, sage, or wild, —
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined.
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents; but his own
Breathed most in ridicule, — which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone, —
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

CVII

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,

Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony, — that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath which grew from fear,
And doom'd him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

CVIII

Yet, peace be with their ashes for by them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge, far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things shall be made
Known unto all, — or hope and dread allay'd
By slumber, on one pillow, — in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decay'd;
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'T will be to be forgiven, or suffer what is just.

CIX

But let me quit man's works again to read
His Maker's, spread around me, and suspend
This page, which from my reveries I feed
Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region, where
The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

CX

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won thee,
To the last halo of the chiefs and sages
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of empires; still
The fount, at which the panting mind assuages
Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there her fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's imperial hill.

CXI

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renew'd with no kind auspices: — to feel
We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be, and to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught, —
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal, —
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul; — no matter — it is taught.

CXII

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile, —
The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth, — but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or smile
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone, — remember'd or forgot.

CXIII

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such: I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

CXIV

I have not loved the world, nor the world me, —
But let us part fair foes: I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful nor weave
Snares for the failing: I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they seem,
That goodness is no name and happiness no dream.

CXV

My daughter! with thy name this song begun —
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end —
I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none
Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend
To whom the shadows of far years extend:
Albeit my brow thou never shouldst behold,
My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
And reach into thy heart, — when mine is cold, —
A token and a tone even from thy father's mould.

CXVI

To aid thy mind's development, to watch
Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see
Almost thy very growth, to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects, wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss, —
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me;
Yet this was in my nature: — as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

CXVII

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me; though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation, and a broken claim;
Though the grave closed between us, — 't were the same,
I know that thou wilt love me; though to drain
*My* blood from out thy being were an aim
And an attainment, all would be in vain, —
Still thou wouldst love me, still that more than life retain.

CXVIII

The child of love, though born in bitterness
And nurtured in convulsion, — of thy sire
These were the elements, and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee, but thy fire
Shall be more temper'd and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea,
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As, with a sigh, I deem thou mightst have been to me!

## CANTO THE FOURTH

LXXVIII–CLXXXVI

LXXVIII

Oh Rome, my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires, and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day —
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago:
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes no[w],

The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers; — dost thou flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride
Where the car climb'd the capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site: —
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is clear —
When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

LXXXII

Alas, the lofty city! and alas,
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! — but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside — decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

LXXXIII

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia; — thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates — Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown,

LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath, — couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and array'd
Her warriors but to conquer — she who veil'd
Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,
Her rushing wings — Oh, she who was Almighty hail'd!

LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors; but our own
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he
Too swept off senates while he hew'd the throne
Down to a block — immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free
And famous through all ages! but beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.

LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crown'd him, on the self-same day

Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And show'd not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue, yet existent in
The austerest form of naked majesty!
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
She-wolf, whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest; mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning — dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead —
The men of iron; and the world hath reared
Cities from out their sepulchres. Men bled
In imitation of the things they fear'd
And fought and conquer'd, and the same course steer'd,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could the same supremacy have near'd,
Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
But vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave —

XC

The fool of false dominion — and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeem'd
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides with the distaff now he seem'd
At Cleopatra's feet, — and now himself he beam'd,

XCI

And came — and saw — and conquer'd! But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart which never seem'd to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness — vanity,
Coquettish in ambition — still he aim'd —
At what? can he avouch — or answer what he claim'd? —

XCII

And would be all or nothing — nor could wait
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fix'd him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread. For *this* the conqueror rears
The arch of triumph! and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flow'd,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow! — Renew thy rainbow, God!

XCIII

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, — whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds — they rest between
Man and his Maker — but of things allow'd,
Averr'd, and known — and daily, hourly seen —
The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd
And the intent of tyranny avow'd,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst — his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,

Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown; —
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave.

C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's — or more — a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honour'd — and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? — such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy — or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs? — for such the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites — early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age — surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children — with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome. — But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know — Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife. Behold his love or pride!

CIV

I know not why, but standing thus by thee,
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou tomb! and other days come back on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

CV

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies founder'd that was ever dear.
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

CVI

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions. Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? — let me not number mine.

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
In subterranean damps where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight: — Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd
From her research hath been, that these are walls —
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls.

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales;
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom and then Glory — when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption, — barbarism at last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page, — 'tis better written here
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amass'd
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask. — Away with words, draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult — despise — laugh, weep, — for here
There is such matter for all feeling: — Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base!
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus' or Trajan's? No — 'tis that of Time:
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn whose ashes slept sublime,

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
And looking to the stars. They had contain'd
A spirit which with these would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,
The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd
But yielded back his conquests: he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues — still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep

Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below,
A thousand years of silenced factions sleep —
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes — burns with Cicero!

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood:
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,
From the first hour of empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer fail'd;
But long before had Freedom's face been veil'd,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
Trod on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame —
The friend of Petrarch — hope of Italy —
Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree
Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf,
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be —
The forum's champion, and the people's chief —
Her new-born Numa thou — with reign, alas, too brief.

CXV

Egeria, sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast! whate'er thou art
Or wert, — a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prison'd in marble; bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

CXVII

Fantastically tangled. The green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems colour'd by its skies.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover.
The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy; and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting

Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love — the earliest oracle!

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports? Could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart —
The dull satiety which all destroys —
And root from out the soul the deadly weed
which cloys? 1071

CXX

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison; — such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants. 1080

CXXI

Oh Love! no habitant of earth thou art —
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquench'd soul — parch'd — wearied — wrung — and riven. 1089

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation: — where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized? —
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves — 't is youth's frenzy; but the cure
Is bitterer still. As charm by charm unwinds 1100
Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize, — wealthiest when most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp away —
Sick — sick; unfound the boon — unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first — 1111
But all too late, — so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice — 't is the same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst —
For all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV

Few — none — find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed

Antipathies — but to recur, ere long,
Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust, — the dust we all have trod.

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature, 't is not in
The harmony of things, — this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew —
Disease, death, bondage — all the woes we see —
And worse, the woes we see not — which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly; 't is a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought, our last and only place
Of refuge — this, at least, shall still be mine.
Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chain'd and tortured — cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.

CXXVIII

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome, —
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 't were its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illume
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words and speak to ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling; and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX

Oh, Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled —
Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love, — sole philosopher,
For all besides are sophists, from thy thrift
Which never loses though it doth defer —
Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands and eyes and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years — though few, yet full of fate: —
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain — shall *they* not mourn?

CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!

Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long —
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution — just,
Had it but been from hands less near — in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart? — Awake! thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incurr'd
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
I bleed withal, and, had it been conferr'd
With a just weapon, it had flow'd unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;
To thee I do devote it — *thou* shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake —
But let that pass — I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffer'd; let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak:
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness. Have I not —
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! —
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,
Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly which they deem not of,
Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set. — Now welcome, thou dread power!
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene

Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
*There* were his young barbarians all at play,
*There* was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday —
All this rush'd with his blood. — Shall he expire
And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much, and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls bow'd —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII

A ruin — yet what ruin! From its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland forest, which the gray walls wear
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 't is on their dust ye tread.

CXLV

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;

And when Rome falls — the World.' From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den — of thieves, or what ye will.

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes — glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee — sanctuary and home
Of art and piety — Pantheon! — pride of Rome!

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days and noblest arts!
Despoil'd, yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts —
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms whose busts around them close.

CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again!
Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my sight —
Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
It is not so; I see them full and plain —
An old man, and a female young and fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
The blood is nectar; — but what doth she there,
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,
Blest into mother, in the innocent look
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves —
What may the fruit be yet? — I know not, Cain was Eve's.

CL

But here youth offers to old age the food,
The milk of his own gift: — it is her sire
To whom she renders back the debt of blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not expire
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
Than Egypt's river: — from that gentle side
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's realm holds no such tide.

CLI

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
Reverse of her decree than in the abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds. Oh, holiest nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII

Turn to the Mole which Hadrian rear'd on high,
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity,
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far Nile's
Enormous model doom'd the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome. How smiles
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!

CLIII

But lo, the dome, the vast and wondrous dome
To which Diana's marvel was a cell,
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle —
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He
Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI

Thou movest — but increasing with the advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise —
All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles, richer painting, shrines where flame
The lamps of gold, and haughty dome which vies
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground — and this the clouds must claim.

CLVII

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break
To separate contemplation the great whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make,
That ask the eye — so here condense thy soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

CLVIII

Not by its fault — but thine. Our outward sense
Is but of gradual grasp: and as it is
That what we have of feeling most intense
Outstrips our faint expression; even so this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze

Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
The worship of the place, or the mere praise
Of art and its great masters, who could raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoon's torture dignifying pain —
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending. Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
And gripe and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long envenom'd chain
Rivets the living links, the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy and light, —
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII

But in his delicate form — a dream of Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above
And madden'd in that vision — are expressed
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest —
A ray of immortality — and stood,
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god!

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath array'd
With an eternal glory — which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought;
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid
One ringlet in the dust; nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 't was wrought.

CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more — these breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing: — if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd
With forms which live and suffer — let that pass —
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phantoms; and the cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever glow'd,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allow'd
To hover on the verge of darkness; — rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the frame

Shall be resolved to something less than this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of fame,
And wipe the dust from off the idle name
We never more shall hear, — but never more,
Oh, happier thought! can we be made the same:
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
These fardels of the heart — the heart whose sweat was gore.

CLXVII

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground;
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head disercwn'd;
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hush'd that pang for ever; with thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it seem'd to cloy.

CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety. — Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. — Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort — vainly wert thou wèd!
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes; in the dust
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is laid,
The love of millions! How we did intrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd
Like stars to shepherds' eyes: — 't was but a meteor beam'd.

CLXXI

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps well:
The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung
Its knell in princely ears till the o'erstung
Nations have arm'd in madness, the strange fate
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale which crushes soon or late, —

CLXXII

These might have been her destiny; but no,
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
Good without effort, great without a foe;
But now a bride and mother — and now *there!*

How many ties did that stern moment tear!
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast
Is link'd the electric chain of that despair,
Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and oppress
The land which loved thee so that none could love thee best.

CLXXIII

Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake; —
And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXIV

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
'Arms and the Man,' whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire: but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

CLXXV

But I forget. — My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part — so let it be:
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark Euxine roll'd

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades. Long years —
Long, though not very many — since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run;
We have had our reward, and it is here, —
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII

Oh that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye Elements, in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted, can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot,
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot?

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;

Man marks the earth with ruin, his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy fields
Are not a spoil for him, — thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: — there let him lay.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war, —
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee —
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play;
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; — boundless, endless, and sublime —
The image of Eternity — the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers — they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror — 't was a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done — my song hath ceased — my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp — and what is writ, is writ, —

Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been — and my visions flit
Less palpably before me — and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been —
A sound which makes us linger; — yet — farewell!
Ye, who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were — with *you*, the moral of his strain!

## 'WHEN WE TWO PARTED'

[Written 1808. Publ. 1816]

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow —
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me —
Why wert thou so dear?

They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well: —
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met —
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee,
After long years,
How should I greet thee? —
With silence and tears.

## 'MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART'

[Written 1810. Publ. 1812]

Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

[Supposed to be Theresa Macri, who afterwards married Mr. Black, an Englishman.]

Maid of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh, give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go,
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

By those tresses unconfined,
Woo'd by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone-encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe,
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

Maid of Athens! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet! when alone.
Though I fly to Istambol,
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee? No!
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

## 'AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR'

[Publ. 1812]

Heu, quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse!

And thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
Too soon return'd to Earth!
Though Earth received them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'T is Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past
And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have pass'd away,
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,
And thou wert lovely to the last,
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught, except its living years.

## STANZAS FOR MUSIC

[Publ. 1816]

O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
Ducentium ortus ex animo; quater
Felix! in imo qui scatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.
GRAY'S *Poemata*.

THERE'S not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'T is not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt, or ocean of excess:

The magnet of their course is gone, or only
points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall
never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like
death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not
dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the foun-
tain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 't is
where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and
mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more
their former hope of rest;
'T is but as ivy-leaves around the ruin'd
turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but
worn and grey beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt, — or be what
I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er
many a vanish'd scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all
brackish though they be,
So, midst the wither'd waste of life, those
tears would flow to me.

## STANZAS FOR MUSIC

[Publ. 1816]

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmèd ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming.

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

## FARE THEE WELL

[Publ. 1816]

'Alas! they had been friends in Youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth:
And constancy lives in realms above;
And Life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain;
. . . . . .
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining —
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs, which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.'
COLERIDGE'S *Christabel*.

FARE thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare *thee well!*
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again:

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'T was not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee —
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe:

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own its life retaineth —
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is — that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed.

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say 'Father!'
Though his care she must forego?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is press'd,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd!

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou nevermore may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with *thee* they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee — by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now:

But 't is done — all words are idle —
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well! — thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die.

## STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

[Publ. 1816]

Though the day of my destiny 's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;

And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
To pain — it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
They may crush, but they shall not contemn —
They may torture, but shall not subdue me —
'T is of *thee* that I think — not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
Though slander'd, thou never couldst shake, —
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 't was not to defame me,
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one —
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'T was folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wild waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

## EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

[Publ. 1830]

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be thine.
Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:

Go where I will, to me thou art the same —
A loved regret which I would not resign.
There yet are two things in my destiny, —
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

The first were nothing — had I still the last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them less.
A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore, —
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd
The gift, — a fate, or will, that walk'd astray;
And I at times have found the struggle hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay:
But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have roll'd
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away:
Something — I know not what — does still uphold
A spirit of slight patience; — not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me, — or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur,
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear),
Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love — but none like thee.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create
A fund for contemplation; — to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire:
Here to be lonely is not desolate,
For much I view which I could most desire,
And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

Oh that thou wert but with me! — but I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude, which I have vaunted so,
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may show; —
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:

Sad havoc Time must with my memory make
Ere *that* or *thou* can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have loved, they are
Resign'd for ever, or divided far.

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will comply —
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister — till I look again on thee.

I can reduce all feelings but this one,
And that I would not; — for at length I see
Such scenes as those wherein my life began,
The earliest — even the only paths for me:
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
I had been better than I now can be;
The passions which have torn me would have slept;
*I* had not suffer'd, and *thou* hadst not wept.

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,
And made me all which they can make — a name.
Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
But all is over — I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone before.

And for the future, this world's future may
From me demand but little of my care;
I have outlived myself by many a day;
Having survived so many things that were;
My years have been no slumber, but the prey
Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a century,
Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.

And for the remnant which may be to come,
I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless, — for within the crowded sum
Of struggles, happiness at times would steal;
And for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings farther. — Nor shall I conceal
That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought profound.

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
We were and are — I am, even as thou art —
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart,
From life's commencement to its slow decline
We are entwined — let death come slow or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last!

## 'SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY'

[Publ. 1814]

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that 's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

## 'OH! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM'

Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd the dead!

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou — who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

## 'WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY'

When coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darken'd dust behind.
Then, unembodied, doth it trace
By steps each planet's heavenly way?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
A thing of eyes, that all survey?

Eternal, boundless, undecay'd,
A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth, or skies display'd,
Shall it survey, shall it recall:
Each fainter trace that memory holds
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the soul beholds,
And all, that was, at once appears.

Before Creation peopled earth,
Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
And where the furthest heaven had birth,
The spirit trace its rising track.
And where the future mars or makes,
Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
While sun is quench'd or system breaks,
Fix'd in its own eternity.

Above or Love, Hope, Hate, or Fear,
It lives all passionless and pure:
An age shall fleet like earthly year,
Its years as moments shall endure.
Away, away, without a wing,
O'er all, through all, its thought shall fly;
A nameless and eternal thing,
Forgetting what it was to die.

## VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps throng'd the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine —
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine!

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand;
The fingers of a man; —
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice.
'Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth.'

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw — but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night, —
The morrow proved it true.

'Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay;
The shroud, his robe of state,
His canopy the stone:
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne!'

## THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

[Publ. 1815]

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!
And there lay the steed with his nostrils all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

## THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

[Publ. 1813]

A TURKISH TALE

'Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.'
BURNS.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD HOLLAND,
THIS TALE IS INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF
REGARD AND RESPECT,
BY HIS GRATEFULLY OBLIGED
AND SINCERE FRIEND,
BYRON.

### CANTO THE FIRST

I

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gúl in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute:
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of Ocean is deepest in dye;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'T is the clime of the East; 't is the land of the Sun —
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell.

II

Begirt with many a gallant slave
Apparell'd as becomes the brave,
Awaiting each his lord's behest
To guide his steps, or guard his rest,
Old Giaffir sate in his Divan.
Deep thought was in his aged eye;
And though the face of Mussulman
Not oft betrays to standers by
The mind within, well skill'd to hide
All but unconquerable pride,
His pensive cheek and pondering brow
Did more than he was wont avow.

III

'Let the chamber be clear'd.' — The train disappear'd —
'Now call me the chief of the Haram guard.'
With Giaffir is none but his only son,
And the Nubian awaiting the sire's award.
'Haroun — when all the crowd that wait
Are pass'd beyond the outer gate
(Woe to the head whose eye beheld
My child Zuleika's face unveil'd!),
Hence, lead my daughter from her tower;
Her fate is fix'd this very hour:
Yet not to her repeat my thought;
By me alone be duty taught!'

'Pacha! to hear is to obey.'
No more must slave to despot say —
Then to the tower had ta'en his way:
But here young Selim silence brake,
First lowly rendering reverence meet;
And downcast look'd, and gently spake,
Still standing at the Pacha's feet:
For son of Moslem must expire,
Ere dare to sit before his sire!

'Father! for fear that thou shouldst chide
My sister, or her sable guide,
Know — for the fault, if fault there be,
Was mine, then fall thy frowns on me —
So lovelily the morning shone,
That — let the old and weary sleep —
I could not; and to view alone
The fairest scenes of land and deep,
With none to listen and reply
To thoughts with which my heart beat high,
Were irksome — for whate'er my mood,
In sooth I love not solitude.

I on Zuleika's slumber broke,
And, as thou knowest that for me
Soon turns the Haram's grating key,
Before the guardian slaves awoke
We to the cypress groves had flown,
And made earth, main, and heaven our own!
There linger'd we, beguiled too long,
With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song;
Till I, who heard the deep tambour
Beat thy Divan's approaching hour,
To thee, and to my duty true,
Warn'd by the sound, to greet thee flew.
But there Zuleika wanders yet —
Nay, Father, rage not — nor forget
That none can pierce that secret bower
But those who watch the women's tower.'

IV

'Son of a slave,' the Pacha said,
'From unbelieving mother bred,
Vain were a father's hope to see
Aught that beseems a man in thee.
Thou, when thine arm should bend the bow,
And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
Thou, Greek in soul if not in creed,
Must pore where babbling waters flow,
And watch unfolding roses blow.
Would that yon orb, whose matin glow
Thy listless eyes so much admire,
Would lend thee something of his fire!
Thou, who wouldst see this battlement
By Christian cannon piecemeal rent;
Nay, tamely view old Stambol's wall
Before the dogs of Moscow fall,
Nor strike one stroke for life and death
Against the curs of Nazareth!
Go — let thy less than woman's hand
Assume the distaff — not the brand.
But, Haroun! — to my daughter speed:
And hark — of thine own head take heed —
If thus Zuleika oft takes wing —
Thou see'st yon bow — it hath a string!'

V

No sound from Selim's lip was heard,
At least that met old Giaffir's ear,
But every frown and every word
Pierced keener than a Christian sword.
'Son of a slave! — reproach'd with fear!
Those gibes had cost another dear.

Son of a slave! — and *who* my sire?'
Thus held his thoughts their dark career;
And glances ev'n of more than ire
Flash forth, then faintly disappear.
Old Giaffir gazed upon his son
And started; for within his eye
He read how much his wrath had done;
He saw rebellion there begun.
'Come hither, boy — what, no reply?
I mark thee — and I know thee too;
But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:
But if thy beard had manlier length,
And if thy hand had skill and strength,
I 'd joy to see thee break a lance,
Albeit against my own perchance.'

As sneeringly these accents fell,
On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:
That eye return'd him glance for glance,
And proudly to his sire's was raised,
Till Giaffir's quail'd and shrunk askance —
And why — he felt, but durst not tell.
'Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
Will one day work me more annoy.
I never loved him from his birth,
And — but his arm is little worth,
And scarcely in the chase could cope
With timid fawn or antelope,
Far less would venture into strife
Where man contends for fame and life —
I would not trust that look or tone:
No, nor the blood so near my own.
That blood — he hath not heard — no more —
I 'll watch him closer than before.
He is an Arab to my sight,
Or Christian crouching in the fight —
But hark! — I hear Zuleika's voice;
Like Houris' hymn it meets mine ear:
She is the offspring of my choice;
Oh! more than ev'n her mother dear,
With all to hope, and nought to fear —
My Peri! ever welcome here!
Sweet as the desert fountain's wave
To lips just cool'd in time to save,
Such to my longing sight art thou;
Nor can they waft to Mecca's shrine
More thanks for life, than I for thine,
Who blest thy birth and bless thee now.'

VI

Fair as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent smiling,
Whose image then was stamp'd upon her mind —
But once beguiled and ever more beguiling;
Dazzling as that, oh! too transcendent vision
To Sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber given,
When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian,
And paints the lost on Earth revived in Heaven;
Soft as the memory of buried love;
Pure as the prayer which Childhood wafts above;
Was she, the daughter of that rude old Chief
Who met the maid with tears — but not of grief.

Who hath not proved how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray?
Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
The might, the majesty of Loveliness?
Such was Zuleika, such around her shone
The nameless charms unmark'd by her alone, —
The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the Music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole:
And, oh! that eye was in itself a Soul!

Her graceful arms in meekness bending
Across her gently-budding breast;
At one kind word those arms extending
To clasp the neck of him who blest
His child caressing and carest,
Zuleika came; and Giaffir felt
His purpose half within him melt.
Not that against her fancied weal
His heart though stern could ever feel;
Affection chain'd her to that heart;
Ambition tore the links apart.

VII

'Zuleika! child of gentleness!
How dear this very day must tell,
When I forget my own distress,
In losing what I love so well,
To bid thee with another dwell—
Another! and a braver man
Was never seen in battle's van.
We Moslem reck not much of blood;
But yet the line of Carasman
Unchanged, unchangeable hath stood
First of the bold Timariot bands
That won and well can keep their lands.
Enough that he who comes to woo
Is kinsman of the Bey Oglou:
His years need scarce a thought employ;
I would not have thee wed a boy.
And thou shalt have a noble dower:
And his and my united power
Will laugh to scorn the death-firman,
Which others tremble but to scan,
And teach the messenger what fate
The bearer of such boon may wait.
And now thou know'st thy father's will;
All that thy sex hath need to know:
'T was mine to teach obedience still—
The way to love, thy lord may show.'

VIII

In silence bow'd the virgin's head;
And if her eye was fill'd with tears
That stifled feeling dare not shed,
And changed her cheek from pale to red,
And red to pale, as through her ears
Those wingèd words like arrows sped,
What could such be but maiden fears?
So bright the tear in Beauty's eye,
Love half regrets to kiss it dry;
So sweet the blush of Bashfulness,
Even Pity scarce can wish it less!

Whate'er it was the sire forgot;
Or if remember'd, mark'd it not;
Thrice clapp'd his hands, and call'd his steed,
Resign'd his gem-adorn'd chibouque,
And mounting featly for the mead,
With Maugrabee and Mamaluke,
His way amid his Delis took,
To witness many an active deed
With sabre keen or blunt jerreed.
The Kislar only and his Moors
Watch well the Haram's massy doors.

IX

His head was leant upon his hand,
His eye look'd o'er the dark blue water
That swiftly glides and gently swells
Between the winding Dardanelles;
But yet he saw nor sea nor strand,
Nor even his Pacha's turban'd band
Mix in the game of mimic slaughter,
Careering cleave the folded felt
With sabre stroke right sharply dealt;
Nor mark'd the javelin-darting crowd,
Nor heard their Ollahs wild and loud—
He thought but of old Giaffir's daughter!

X

No word from Selim's bosom broke;
One sigh Zuleika's thought bespoke:
Still gazed he through the lattice grate,
Pale, mute, and mournfully sedate.
To him Zuleika's eye was turn'd,
But little from his aspect learn'd;
Equal her grief, yet not the same;
Her heart confess'd a gentler flame:
But yet that heart, alarm'd or weak,
She knew not why, forbade to speak.
Yet speak she must—but when essay?
'How strange he thus should turn away!
Not thus we e'er before have met;
Not thus shall be our parting yet.'
Thrice paced she slowly through the room,
And watch'd his eye—it still was fix'd:
She snatch'd the urn wherein was mix'd
The Persian Atar-gul's perfume,
And sprinkled all its odours o'er
The pictured roof and marble floor:
The drops, that through his glittering vest
The playful girl's appeal address'd,
Unheeded o'er his bosom flew,
As if that breast were marble too.
'What, sullen yet? it must not be—
Oh! gentle Selim, this from thee!'
She saw in curious order set
The fairest flowers of eastern land—
'He loved them once; may touch them yet,
If offer'd by Zuleika's hand.'
The childish thought was hardly breathed
Before the Rose was pluck'd and wreathed;
The next fond moment saw her seat
Her fairy form at Selim's feet:
'This rose to calm my brother's cares
A message from the Bulbul bears;

It says to-night he will prolong
For Selim's ear his sweetest song;
And though his note is somewhat sad,
He 'll try for once a strain more glad,
With some faint hope his alter'd lay
May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

XI

'What! not receive my foolish flower?
Nay then I am indeed unblest:
On me can thus thy forehead lower?
And know'st thou not who loves thee best?
Oh, Selim dear! oh, more than dearest!
Say, is it me thou hat'st or fearest?
Come, lay thy head upon my breast,
And I will kiss thee into rest,
Since words of mine, and songs must fail,
Ev'n from my fabled nightingale.
I knew our sire at times was stern,
But this from thee had yet to learn:
Too well I know he loves thee not;
But is Zuleika's love forgot?
Ah! deem I right? the Pacha's plan —
This kinsman Bey of Carasman
Perhaps may prove some foe of thine;
If so, I swear by Mecca's shrine,
If shrines that ne'er approach allow
To woman's step admit her vow,
Without thy free consent, command,
The Sultan should not have my hand!
Think'st thou that I could bear to part
With thee, and learn to halve my heart?
Ah! were I sever'd from thy side,
Where were thy friend — and who my guide?
Years have not seen, Time shall not see
The hour that tears my soul from thee:
Even Azrael, from his deadly quiver
When flies that shaft, and fly it must,
That parts all else, shall doom for ever
Our hearts to undivided dust!'

XII

He lived — he breathed — he moved — he felt;
He raised the maid from where she knelt;
His trance was gone — his keen eye shone
With thoughts that long in darkness dwelt;
With thoughts that burn — in rays that melt.
As the stream late conceal'd
By the fringe of its willows,
When it rushes reveal'd
In the light of its billows;
As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flash'd the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.
A war-horse at the trumpet's sound,
A lion roused by heedless hound,
A tyrant waked to sudden strife
By graze of ill-directed knife,
Starts not to more convulsive life
Than he, who heard that vow, display'd,
And all, before repress'd, betray'd:
'Now thou art mine, for ever mine,
With life to keep, and scarce with life resign;
Now thou art mine, that sacred oath,
Though sworn by one, hath bound us both.
Yes, fondly, wisely hast thou done;
That vow hath saved more heads than one;
But blench not thou — thy simplest tress
Claims more from me than tenderness;
I would not wrong the slenderest hair,
That clusters round thy forehead fair,
For all the treasures buried far
Within the caves of Istakar.
This morning clouds upon me lower'd,
Reproaches on my head were shower'd,
And Giaffir almost call'd me coward!
Now I have motive to be brave;
The son of his neglected slave, —
Nay, start not, 't was the term he gave, —
May show, though little apt to vaunt,
A heart his words nor deeds can daunt.
*His* son, indeed! — yet, thanks to thee,
Perchance I am, at least shall be;
But let our plighted secret vow
Be only known to us as now.
I know the wretch who dares demand
From Giaffir thy reluctant hand;
More ill-got wealth, a meaner soul
Holds not a Musselim's control:
Was he not bred in Egripo?
A viler race let Israel show;
But let that pass — to none be told
Our oath; the rest shall time unfold.
To me and mine leave Osman Bey;
I 've partisans for peril's day:
Think not I am what I appear;
I 've arms, and friends, and vengeance near.'

XIII

'Think not thou art what thou appearest!
My Selim, thou art sadly changed:

This morn I saw thee gentlest, dearest;
But now thou 'rt from thyself estranged.
My love thou surely knew'st before,
It ne'er was less, nor can be more.
To see thee, hear thee, near thee stay,
And hate the night I know not why,
Save that we meet not but by day;
With thee to live, with thee to die,
I dare not to my hope deny:
Thy cheek, thine eyes, thy lips to kiss,
Like this — and this — no more than this:
For, Alla! sure thy lips are flame:
What fever in thy veins is flushing?
My own have nearly caught the same,
At least I feel my cheek, too, blushing.
To soothe thy sickness, watch thy health,
Partake, but never waste thy wealth,
Or stand with smiles unmurmuring by,
And lighten half thy poverty;
Do all but close thy dying eye,
For that I could not live to try;
To these alone my thoughts aspire:
More can I do? or thou require?
But, Selim, thou must answer why
We need so much of mystery:
The cause I cannot dream nor tell,
But be it, since thou say'st 't is well;
Yet what thou mean'st by "arms" and "friends,"
Beyond my weaker sense extends.
I meant that Giaffir should have heard
The very vow I plighted thee;
His wrath would not revoke my word:
But surely he would leave me free.
Can this fond wish seem strange in me,
To be what I have ever been?
What other hath Zuleika seen
From simple childhood's earliest hour?
What other can she seek to see
Than thee, companion of her bower,
The partner of her infancy?
These cherish'd thoughts with life begun,
Say, why must I no more avow?
What change is wrought to make me shun
The truth; my pride, and thine till now?
To meet the gaze of stranger's eyes
Our law, our creed, our God denies;
Nor shall one wandering thought of mine
At such, our Prophet's will, repine:
No! happier made by that decree!
He left me all in leaving thee.

Deep were my anguish, thus compell'd
To wed with one I ne'er beheld:
This wherefore should I not reveal?
Why wilt thou urge me to conceal?
I know the Pacha's haughty mood
To thee hath never boded good;
And he so often storms at nought,
Allah! forbid that e'er he ought!
And why, I know not, but within
My heart concealment weighs like sin.
If then such secrecy be crime,
And such it feels while lurking here;
Oh, Selim! tell me yet in time,
Nor leave me thus to thoughts of fear.
Ah! yonder see the Tchocadar,
My father leaves the mimic war;
I tremble now to meet his eye —
Say, Selim, canst thou tell me why?'

XIV

'Zuleika, to thy tower's retreat
Betake thee — Giaffir I can greet:
And now with him I fain must prate
Of firmans, imposts, levies, state.
There 's fearful news from Danube's banks,
Our Vizier nobly thins his ranks,
For which the Giaour may give him thanks!
Our Sultan hath a shorter way
Such costly triumph to repay.
But, mark me, when the twilight drum
Hath warn'd the troops to food and sleep,
Unto thy cell will Selim come:
Then softly from the Haram creep
Where we may wander by the deep:
Our garden-battlements are steep;
Nor these will rash intruder climb
To list our words, or stint our time;
And if he doth, I want not steel
Which some have felt, and more may feel.
Then shalt thou learn of Selim more
Than thou hast heard or thought before:
Trust me, Zuleika — fear not me!
Thou know'st I hold a Haram key.'

'Fear thee, my Selim! ne'er till now
Did word like this —'
'Delay not thou;
I keep the key — and Haroun's guard
Have *some*, and hope of *more* reward.
To-night, Zuleika, thou shalt hear
My tale, my purpose, and my fear:
I am not, love! what I appear.'

## CANTO THE SECOND

I

THE winds are high on Helle's wave,
As on that night of stormy water
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young, the beautiful, the brave,
The lonely hope of Sestos' daughter.
Oh! when alone along the sky
Her turret-torch was blazing high,
Though rising gale and breaking foam
And shrieking sea-birds warn'd him home;
And clouds aloft and tides below,
With signs and sounds, forbade to go,
He could not see, he would not hear,
Or sound or sign foreboding fear;
His eye but saw that light of love,
The only star it hail'd above;
His ear but rang with Hero's song,
'Ye waves, divide not lovers long!' —
That tale is old, but love anew
May nerve young hearts to prove as true.

II

The winds are high, and Helle's tide
Rolls darkly heaving to the main;
And Night's descending shadows hide
That field with blood bedew'd in vain,
The desert of old Priam's pride;
The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
All — save immortal dreams that could beguile
The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle!

III

Oh! yet — for there my steps have been:
These feet have press'd the sacred shore,
These limbs that buoyant wave hath borne —
Minstrel! with thee to muse, to mourn,
To trace again those fields of yore,
Believing every hillock green
Contains no fabled hero's ashes,
And that around the undoubted scene
Thine own 'broad Hellespont' still dashes,
Be long my lot! and cold were he
Who there could gaze denying thee!

IV

The night hath closed on Helle's stream,
Nor yet hath risen on Ida's hill
That moon, which shone on his high theme:
No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
But conscious shepherds bless it still.
Their flocks are grazing on the mound
Of him who felt the Dardan's arrow:
That mighty heap of gather'd ground
Which Ammon's son ran proudly round,
By nations raised, by monarchs crown'd,
Is now a lone and nameless barrow!
Within — thy dwelling-place how narrow!
Without — can only strangers breathe
The name of him that *was* beneath:
Dust long outlasts the storied stone;
But Thou — thy very dust is gone!

V

Late, late to-night will Dian cheer
The swain, and chase the boatman's fear;
Till then — no beacon on the cliff
May shape the course of struggling skiff;
The scatter'd lights that skirt the bay,
All, one by one, have died away;
The only lamp of this lone hour
Is glimmering in Zuleika's tower.
Yes! there is light in that lone chamber,
And o'er her silken Ottoman
Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,
O'er which her fairy fingers ran;
Near these, with emerald rays beset
(How could she thus that gem forget?),
Her mother's sainted amulet,
Whereon engraved the Koorsee text
Could smooth this life and win the next;
And by her comboloio lies
A Koran of illumined dyes;
And many a bright emblazon'd rhyme
By Persian scribes redeem'd from time;
And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,
Reclines her now neglected lute;
And round her lamp of fretted gold
Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;
The richest work of Iran's loom,
And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;
All that can eye or sense delight
Are gather'd in that gorgeous room:
But yet it hath an air of gloom.
She, of this Peri cell the sprite,
What doth she hence, and on so rude a night?

VI

Wrapt in the darkest sable vest,
Which none save noblest Moslem wear,

To guard from winds of heaven the breast
As heaven itself to Selim dear,
With cautious steps the thicket threading,
And starting oft, as through the glade
The gust its hollow moanings made,
Till, on the smoother pathway treading,
More free her timid bosom beat,
The maid pursued her silent guide;
And though her terror urged retreat,
How could she quit her Selim's side?
How teach her tender lips to chide?

VII

They reach'd at length a grotto, hewn
By nature but enlarged by art,
Where oft her lute she wont to tune,
And oft her Koran conn'd apart;
And oft in youthful revery
She dream'd what Paradise might be:
Where woman's parted soul shall go
Her Prophet had disdain'd to show;
But Selim's mansion was secure,
Nor deem'd she, could he long endure
His bower in other worlds of bliss,
Without *her*, most beloved in this!
Oh! who so dear with him could dwell?
What Houri soothe him half so well?

VIII

Since last she visited the spot
Some change seem'd wrought within the grot.
It might be only that the night
Disguised things seen by better light:
That brazen lamp but dimly threw
A ray of no celestial hue;
But in a nook within the cell
Her eye on stranger objects fell.
There arms were piled, not such as wield
The turban'd Delis in the field;
But brands of foreign blade and hilt,
And one was red — perchance with guilt!
Ah! how without can blood be spilt?
A cup too on the board was set
That did not seem to hold sherbet.
What may this mean? she turn'd to see
Her Selim — 'Oh! can this be he?'

IX

His robe of pride was thrown aside,
His brow no high-crown'd turban bore,
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round, his temples wore.
That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
Were worthy of a diadem,
No longer glitter'd at his waist,
Where pistols unadorn'd were braced;
And from his belt a sabre swung,
And from his shoulder loosely hung
The cloak of white; the thin capote
That decks the wandering Candiote;
Beneath, his golden plated vest
Clung like a cuirass to his breast;
The greaves below his knee that wound
With silvery scales were sheathed and bound.
But were it not that high command
Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand,
All that a careless eye could see
In him was some young Galiongée.

X

'I said I was not what I seem'd,
And now thou see'st my words were true;
I have a tale thou hast not dream'd,
If sooth — its truth must others rue.
My story now 't were vain to hide,
I must not see thee Osman's bride:
But had not thine own lips declared
How much of that young heart I shared,
I could not, must not, yet have shown
The darker secret of my own.
In this I speak not now of love;
That, let time, truth, and peril prove:
But first — Oh! never wed another —
Zuleika! I am not thy brother!'

XI

'Oh! not my brother! — yet unsay —
God! am I left alone on earth
To mourn — I dare not curse — the day
That saw my solitary birth?
Oh! thou wilt love me now no more!
My sinking heart foreboded ill;
But know *me* all I was before,
Thy sister — friend — Zuleika still.
Thou led'st me here perchance to kill;
If thou hast cause for vengeance, see!
My breast is offer'd — take thy fill!
Far better with the dead to be
Than live thus nothing now to thee:
Perhaps far worse, for now I know
Why Giaffir always seem'd thy foe;
And I, alas! am Giaffir's child,
For whom thou wert contemn'd, reviled.
If not thy sister — wouldst thou save
My life, Oh! bid me be thy slave!'

XII

'My slave, Zuleika! — nay, I 'm thine:
But, gentle love, this transport calm,
Thy lot shall yet be link'd with mine;
I swear it by our Prophet's shrine,
And be that thought thy sorrow's balm.
So may the Koran verse display'd
Upon its steel direct my blade
In danger's hour to guard us both,
As I preserve that awful oath!
The name in which thy heart hath prided
Must change; but, my Zuleika, know,
That tie is widen'd, not divided,
Although thy Sire 's my deadliest foe.
My father was to Giaffir all
That Selim late was deem'd to thee;
That brother wrought a brother's fall,
But spared, at least, my infancy;
And lull'd me with a vain deceit
That yet a like return may meet.
He rear'd me, not with tender help,
But like the nephew of a Cain;
He watch'd me like a lion's whelp,
That gnaws and yet may break his chain.
My father's blood in every vein
Is boiling; but for thy dear sake
No present vengeance will I take;
Though here I must no more remain.
But first, beloved Zuleika! hear
How Giaffir wrought this deed of fear.

XIII

'How first their strife to rancour grew,
If love or envy made them foes,
It matters little if I knew;
In fiery spirits, slights, though few
And thoughtless, will disturb repose.
In war Abdallah's arm was strong,
Remember'd yet in Bosniac song,
And Paswan's rebel hordes attest
How little love they bore such guest:
His death is all I need relate,
The stern effect of Giaffir's hate;
And how my birth, disclosed to me,
Whate'er beside it makes, hath made me free.

XIV

'When Paswan, after years of strife,
At last for power, but first for life,
In Widdin's walls too proudly sate,
Our Pachas rallied round the state;
Nor last nor least in high command,
Each brother led a separate band;
They gave their horse-tails to the wind,
And mustering in Sophia's plain
Their tents were pitch'd, their post assign'd;
To one, alas! assign'd in vain!
What need of words? the deadly bowl,
By Giaffir's orders drugg'd and given,
With venom subtle as his soul,
Dismiss'd Abdallah's hence to heaven.
Reclined and feverish in the bath,
He, when the hunter's sport was up,
But little deem'd a brother's wrath
To quench his thirst had such a cup:
The bowl a bribed attendant bore;
He drank one draught nor needed more!
If thou my tale, Zuleika, doubt,
Call Haroun — he can tell it out.

XV

'The deed once done, and Paswan's feud
In part suppress'd, though ne'er subdued,
Abdallah's Pachalick was gain'd.
Thou know'st not what in our Divan
Can wealth procure for worse than man:
Abdallah's honours were obtain'd
By him a brother's murder stain'd;
'T is true, the purchase nearly drain'd
His ill got treasure, soon replaced.
Wouldst question whence? Survey the waste,
And ask the squalid peasant how
His gains repay his broiling brow! —
Why me the stern usurper spared,
Why thus with me his palace shared,
I know not. Shame, regret, remorse,
And little fear from infant's force;
Besides, adoption as a son
By him whom Heaven accorded none,
Or some unknown cabal, caprice,
Preserved me thus; — but not in peace:
He cannot curb his haughty mood,
Nor I forgive a father's blood.

XVI

'Within thy father's house are foes;
Not all who break his bread are t:
To these should I my birth disclose,
His days, his very hours were few:
They only want a heart to lead,
A hand to point them to the deed.
But Haroun only knows, or knew
This tale whose close is almost nigh:
He in Abdallah's palace grew,
And held that post in his Serai
Which holds he here — he saw him die.

But what could single slavery do?
Avenge his lord? alas! too late;
Or save his son from such a fate?
He chose the last, and when elate
With foes subdued, or friends betray'd,
Proud Giaffir in high triumph sate,
He led me helpless to his gate,
And not in vain it seems essay'd
To save the life for which he pray'd.
The knowledge of my birth secured
From all and each, but most from me,
Thus Giaffir's safety was ensured.
Removed he too from Roumelie
To this our Asiatic side,
Far from our seats by Danube's tide,
With none but Haroun, who retains
Such knowledge — and that Nubian feels
A tyrant's secrets are but chains,
From which the captive gladly steals,
And this and more to me reveals:
Such still to guilt just Alla sends —
Slaves, tools, accomplices — no friends!

XVII

'All this, Zuleika, harshly sounds;
But harsher still my tale must be:
Howe'er my tongue thy softness wounds,
Yet I must prove all truth to thee.
I saw thee start this garb to see,
Yet is it one I oft have worn,
And long must wear: this Galiongée,
To whom thy plighted vow is sworn,
Is leader of those pirate hordes
Whose laws and lives are on their swords;
To hear whose desolating tale
Would make thy waning cheek more pale.
Those arms thou see'st my band have brought,
The hands that wield are not remote;
This cup too for the rugged knaves
Is fill'd — once quaff'd, they ne'er repine:
Our Prophet might forgive the slaves;
They 're only infidels in wine.

XVIII

'What could I be? Proscribed at home,
And taunted to a wish to roam;
And listless left — for Giaffir's fear
Denied the courser and the spear —
Though oft — Oh, Mahomet! how oft! —
In full Divan the despot scoff'd,
As if *my* weak unwilling hand
Refused the bridle or the brand.
He ever went to war alone,
And pent me here untried, unknown;
To Haroun's care with women left,
By hope unblest, of fame bereft,
While thou — whose softness long endear'd,
Though it unmann'd me, still had cheer'd —
To Brusa's walls for safety sent,
Awaitedst there the field's event.
Haroun, who saw my spirit pining
Beneath inaction's sluggish yoke,
His captive, though with dread resigning,
My thraldom for a season broke,
On promise to return before
The day when Giaffir's charge was o'er.
'T is vain — my tongue can not impart
My almost drunkenness of heart,
When first this liberated eye
Survey'd Earth, Ocean, Sun, and Sky,
As if my spirit pierced them through,
And all their inmost wonders knew!
One word alone can paint to thee
That more than feeling — I was Free!
E'en for thy presence ceased to pine;
The World — nay, Heaven itself was mine!

XIX

'The shallop of a trusty Moor
Convey'd me from this idle shore;
I long'd to see the isles that gem
Old Ocean's purple diadem:
I sought by turns, and saw them all.
But when and where I join'd the crew,
With whom I 'm pledged to rise or fall
When all that we design to do
Is done, 't will then be time more meet
To tell thee, when the tale 's complete.

XX

''T is true, they are a lawless brood,
But rough in form, nor mild in mood;
And every creed and every race
With them hath found, may find a place:
But open speech, and ready hand,
Obedience to their chief's command;
A soul for every enterprise,
That never sees with Terror's eyes;
Friendship for each, and faith to all,
And vengeance vow'd for those who fall,
Have made them fitting instruments
For more than ev'n my own intents.
And some — and I have studied all
Distinguish'd from the vulgar rank,

But chiefly to my council call
The wisdom of the cautious Frank —
And some to higher thoughts aspire.
The last of Lambro's patriots there
Anticipated freedom share;
And oft around the cavern fire
On visionary schemes debate,
To snatch the Rayahs from their fate.
So let them ease their hearts with prate
Of equal rights, which man ne'er knew;
I have a love for freedom too.
Ay! let me like the ocean-Patriarch roam,
Or only know on land the Tartar's home!
My tent on shore, my galley on the sea,
Are more than cities and Serais to me:
Borne by my steed, or wafted by my sail,
Across the desert, or before the gale,
Bound where thou wilt, my barb! or glide, my prow!
But be the star that guides the wanderer, Thou!
Thou, my Zuleika, share and bless my bark;
The Dove of peace and promise to mine ark!
Or, since that hope denied in worlds of strife,
Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life!
The evening beam that smiles the clouds away,
And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!
Blest — as the Muezzin's strain from Mecca's wall
To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his call;
Soft — as the melody of youthful days,
That steals the trembling tear of speechless praise;
Dear — as his native song to Exile's ears,
Shall sound each tone thy long-loved voice endears.
For thee in those bright isles is built a bower
Blooming as Aden in its earliest hour.
A thousand swords, with Selim's heart and hand,
Wait — wave — defend — destroy — at thy command!
Girt by my band, Zuleika at my side,
The spoil of nations shall bedeck my bride.
The Haram's languid years of listless ease
Are well resign'd for cares — for joys like these.
Not blind to fate, I see, where'er I rove,
Unnumber'd perils, — but one only love!
Yet well my toils shall that fond breast repay,
Though fortune frown, or falser friends betray.
How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
Should all be changed, to find thee faithful still!
Be but thy soul, like Selim's, firmly shown;
To thee be Selim's tender as thine own;
To soothe each sorrow, share in each delight,
Blend every thought, do all — but disunite!
Once free, 't is mine our horde again to guide;
Friends to each other, foes to aught beside:
Yet there we follow but the bent assign'd
By fatal Nature to man's warring kind:
Mark! where his carnage and his conquests cease!
He makes a solitude, and calls it — peace!
I, like the rest, must use my skill or strength,
But ask no land beyond my sabre's length:
Power sways but by division, her resource
The blest alternative of fraud or force!
Ours be the last; in time deceit may come
When cities cage us in a social home:
There ev'n thy soul might err — how oft the heart
Corruption shakes which peril could not part!
And woman, more than man, when death or woe
Or even Disgrace would lay her lover low,
Sunk in the lap of Luxury will shame —
Away suspicion! — *not* Zuleika's name!
But life is hazard at the best; and here
No more remains to win, and much to fear:
Yes, fear! — the doubt, the dread of losing thee,
By Osman's power, and Giaffir's stern decree.
That dread shall vanish with the favouring gale,
Which love to-night hath promised to my sail:
No danger daunts the pair his smile hath blest,
Their steps still roving, but their hearts at rest.
With thee all toils are sweet, each clime hath charms;
Earth — sea alike — our world within our arms!

Ay — let the loud winds whistle o'er the deck,
So that those arms cling closer round my neck:
The deepest murmur of this lip shall be
No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee!
The war of elements no fears impart
To Love, whose deadliest bane is human Art:
*There* lie the only rocks our course can check;
*Here* moments menace — *there* are years of wreck!
But hence ye thoughts that rise in Horror's shape!
This hour bestows, or ever bars escape.
Few words remain of mine my tale to close;
Of thine but *one* to waft us from our foes;
Yea, foes — to me will Giaffir's hate decline?
And is not Osman, who would part us, thine?

XXI

'His head and faith from doubt and death
Return'd in time my guard to save;
Few heard, none told, that o'er the wave
From isle to isle I roved the while:
And since, though parted from my band,
Too seldom now I leave the land,
No deed they 've done, nor deed shall do,
Ere I have heard and doom'd it too:
I form the plan, decree the spoil,
'T is fit I oftener share the toil.
But now too long I 've held thine ear;
Time presses, floats my bark, and here
We leave behind but hate and fear.
To-morrow Osman with his train
Arrives — to-night must break thy chain:
And would'st thou save that haughty Bey,
Perchance, *his* life who gave thee thine,
With me this hour away — away!
But yet, though thou art plighted mine,
Would'st thou recall thy willing vow,
Appall'd by truths imparted now,
Here rest I — not to see thee wed:
But be that peril on *my* head!'

XXII

Zuleika, mute and motionless,
Stood like that statue of distress,
When, her last hope for ever gone,
The mother harden'd into stone;
All in the maid that eye could see
Was but a younger Niobé.
But ere her lip, or even her eye,
Essay'd to speak, or look reply,
Beneath the garden's wicket porch
Far flash'd on high a blazing torch!
Another — and another — and another —
'Oh! fly — no more — yet now my more than brother!'
Far, wide, through every thicket spread,
The fearful lights are gleaming red;
Nor these alone, for each right hand
Is ready with a sheathless brand.
They part, pursue, return, and wheel
With searching flambeau, shining steel;
And last of all, his sabre waving,
Stern Giaffir in his fury raving:
And now almost they touch the cave —
Oh! must that grot be Selim's grave?

XXIII

Dauntless he stood! — 'T is come — soon past —
One kiss, Zuleika — 't is my last.
But yet my band not far from shore
May hear this signal, see the flash;
Yet now too few — the attempt were rash:
No matter — yet one effort more.'
Forth to the cavern mouth he stept;
His pistol's echo rang on high,
Zuleika started not, nor wept,
Despair benumb'd her breast and eye! —
'They hear me not, or if they ply
Their oars, 't is but to see me die;
That sound hath drawn my foes more nigh.
Then forth my father's scimitar,
Thou ne'er hast seen less equal war!
Farewell, Zuleika! — Sweet! retire:
Yet stay within — here linger safe,
At thee his rage will only chafe.
Stir not, lest even to thee perchance
Some erring blade or ball should glance.
Fear'st thou for him? — may I expire
If in this strife I seek thy sire!
No — though by him that poison pour'd:
No — though again he call me coward!
But tamely shall I meet their steel?
No — as each crest save *his* may feel!'

XXIV

One bound he made, and gain'd the sand:
Already at his feet hath sunk
The foremost of the prying band,
A gasping head, a quivering trunk.

Another falls — but round him close
A swarming circle of his foes;
From right to left his path he cleft,
And almost met the meeting wave:
His boat appears — not five oars' length —
His comrades strain with desperate strength —
Oh! are they yet in time to save?
His feet the foremost breakers lave;
His band are plunging in the bay,
Their sabres glitter through the spray;
Wet — wild — unwearied to the strand
They struggle — now they touch the land!
They come — 't is but to add to slaughter —
His heart's best blood is on the water.

XXV

Escaped from shot, unharm'd by steel,
Or scarcely grazed its force to feel,
Had Selim won, betray'd, beset,
To where the strand and billows met;
There as his last step left the land,
And the last death-blow dealt his hand —
Ah! wherefore did he turn to look
For her his eye but sought in vain?
That pause, that fatal gaze he took,
Hath doom'd his death, or fix'd his chain.
Sad proof, in peril and in pain,
How late will Lover's hope remain
His back was to the dashing spray;
Behind, but close, his comrades lay,
When, at the instant, hiss'd the ball —
'So may the foes of Giaffir fall!'
Whose voice is heard? whose carbine rang?
Whose bullet through the night-air sang,
Too nearly, deadly aim'd to err?
'T is thine — Abdallah's Murderer!
The father slowly rued thy hate,
The son hath found a quicker fate:
Fast from his breast the blood is bubbling,
The whiteness of the sea-foam troubling, —
If aught his lips essay'd to groan,
The rushing billows choked the tone!

XXVI

Morn slowly rolls the clouds away;
Few trophies of the fight are there:
The shouts that shook the midnight-bay
Are silent; but some signs of fray
That strand of strife may bear,
And fragments of each shiver'd brand;
Steps stamp'd; and dash'd into the sand
The print of many a struggling hand
May there be mark'd; nor far remote
A broken torch, an oarless boat;
And tangled on the weeds that heap
The beach where shelving to the deep
There lies a white capote!
'T is rent in twain — one dark-red stain
The wave yet ripples o'er in vain:
But where is he who wore?
Ye, who would o'er his relics weep,
Go, seek them where the surges sweep
Their burthen round Sigæum's steep
And cast on Lemnos' shore.
The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
O'er which their hungry beaks delay,
As shaken on his restless pillow,
His head heaves with the heaving billow;
That hand, whose motion is not life,
Yet feebly seems to menace strife,
Flung by the tossing tide on high,
Then levell'd with the wave —
What recks it, though that corse shall lie
Within a living grave?
The bird that tears that prostrate form
Hath only robb'd the meaner worm;
The only heart, the only eye
Had bled or wept to see him die,
Had seen those scatter'd limbs composed,
And mourn'd above his turban stone,
That heart hath burst — that eye was closed —
Yea — closed before his own!

XXVII

By Helle's stream there is a voice of wail!
And woman's eye is wet, man's cheek is pale:
Zuleika! last of Giaffir's race,
Thy destined lord is come too late:
He sees not — ne'er shall see thy face!
Can he not hear
The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant ear?
Thy handmaids weeping at the gate,
The Koran-chanters of the hymn of fate,
The silent slaves with folded arms that wait,
Sighs in the hall, and shrieks upon the gale,
Tell him thy tale!
Thou didst not view thy Selim fall!
That fearful moment when he left the cave
Thy heart grew chill:

He was thy hope — thy joy — thy love — thine all —
And that last thought on him thou couldst not save
Sufficed to kill;
Burst forth in one wild cry — and all was still.
Peace to thy broken heart and virgin grave!
Ah, happy! but of life to lose the worst!
That grief — though deep — though fatal — was thy first!
Thrice happy! ne'er to feel nor fear the force
Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge, remorse!
And, oh! that pang where more than Madness lies!
The worm that will not sleep — and never dies;
Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night,
That dreads the darkness and yet loathes the light,
That winds around and tears the quivering heart!
Ah, wherefore not consume it — and depart! —
Woe to thee, rash and unrelenting chief!
Vainly thou heap'st the dust upon thy head,
Vainly the sackcloth o'er thy limbs dost spread:
By that same hand Abdallah — Selim bled.
Now let it tear thy beard in idle grief:
Thy pride of heart, thy bride for Osman's bed,
She, whom thy sultan had but seen to wed,
Thy Daughter 's dead!
Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely beam,
The Star hath set that shone on Helle's stream.
What quench'd its ray? — the blood that thou hast shed!
Hark! to the hurried question of Despair:
'Where is my child?' an Echo answers — 'Where?'

XXVIII

Within the place of thousand tombs
That shine beneath, while dark above
The sad but living cypress glooms,
And withers not though branch and leaf
Are stamp'd with an eternal grief
Like early unrequited Love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms,
Ev'n in that deadly grove —
A single rose is shedding there
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
It looks as planted by Despair —
So white — so faint — the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high;
And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem — in vain —
To-morrow sees it bloom again!
The stalk some spirit gently rears,
And waters with celestial tears;
For well may maids of Helle deem
That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering hour,
And buds unshelter'd by a bower;
Nor droops, though spring refuse her shower,
Nor woos the summer beam.
To it the livelong night there sings
A bird unseen — but not remote:
Invisible his airy wings,
But soft as harp that Houri strings
His long entrancing note!
It were the Bulbul; but his throat,
Though mournful, pours not such a strain;
For they who listen cannot leave
The spot, but linger there and grieve,
As if they loved in vain!
And yet so sweet the tears they shed,
'T is sorrow so unmix'd with dread,
They scarce can bear the morn to break
That melancholy spell,
And longer yet would weep and wake,
He sings so wild and well!
But when the day-blush bursts from high,
Expires that magic melody.
And some have been who could believe
(So fondly youthful dreams deceive,
Yet harsh be they that blame)
That note so piercing and profound
Will shape and syllable its sound
Into Zuleika's name.
'T is from her cypress summit heard,
That melts in air the liquid word:
'T is from her lowly virgin earth
That white rose takes its tender birth.

There late was laid a marble stone;
Eve saw it placed — the Morrow gone!
It was no mortal arm that bore
That deep-fix'd pillar to the shore;
For there, as Helle's legends tell,
Next morn 't was found where Selim fell;
Lash'd by the tumbling tide, whose wave
Denied his bones a holier grave.
And there by night, reclined, 't is said,
Is seen a ghastly turban'd head:
And hence extended by the billow,
'T is named the 'Pirate-phantom's pillow!'
Where first it lay that mourning flower
Hath flourish'd; flourisheth this hour,
Alone and dewy, coldly pure and pale;
As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's tale!

## SONNET TO LAKE LEMAN

[First published with the *Prisoner of Chillon*, in 1816.]

Rousseau, Voltaire, our Gibbon, and De Staël —
Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore,
Thy shore of names like these! — Wert thou no more,
Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but by *thee*,
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly gliding o'er the crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

### A FABLE

[Publ. 1816]

### SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd —
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar; for 't was trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! — May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears.
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd — forbidden fare.
But this was for my father's faith,
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place.
We were seven — who now are one,
Six in youth — and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;

Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp.
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years — I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three — yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight.
And thus together, yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'T was still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound — not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do — and did my best;
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven —
For him my soul was sorely moved.
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles being free) —
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills;
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy: — but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline —
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement
Which round about the wave inthrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made — and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,

Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunters' fare,
And for the like had little care.
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side.
But why delay the truth? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died — and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer;
They coldly laugh'd — and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired —
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood: —
I 've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I 've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I 've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors — this was woe
Unmix'd with such — but sure and slow.
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less.
I listen'd, but I could not hear —
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd.
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound —
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him: — I found him not,
*I* only stirr'd in this black spot,
*I* only lived — *I* only drew
The accursèd breath of dungeon-dew;
The last — the sole — the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill,
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive —
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,

I had no earthly hope — but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well — I never knew;
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too.
I had no thought, no feeling — none —
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night — it was not day,
It was not even the dungeon-light
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness — without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime —
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain, —
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery.
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For — Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile —
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 't was mortal — well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone, —
Lone — as the corse within its shroud,
Lone — as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was: — my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me.
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;

But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them — and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down.
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled and would fain
I had not left my recent chain.
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save;
And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days —
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote.
At last men came to set me free,
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home.
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell —
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are: — even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

## MAZEPPA

[Publ. 1819]

### ADVERTISEMENT

Celui qui remplissait alors cette place était un gentilhomme Polonais, nommé Mazeppa, né dans le palatinat de Podolie : il avait été élevé page de Jean Casimir, et avait pris à sa cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres. Une intrigue qu'il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la femme d'un gentilhomme Polonais ayant été découverte, le mari le fit lier tout nu sur un cheval farouche, et le laissa aller en cet état. Le cheval, qui était du pays de l'Ukraine, y retourna, et y porta Mazeppa, demi-mort de fatigue et de faim. Quelques paysans le secoururent : il resta longtems parmi eux, et se signala dans plusieurs courses contre les Tartares. La supériorité de ses lumières lui donna une grande considération parmi les Cosaques : sa réputation s'augmentant de jour en jour obligea le Czar à le faire Prince de l'Ukraine. — VOLTAIRE, *Hist. de Charles XII.*, p. 196.

Le roi fuyant, et poursuivi, eut son cheval tué sous lui ; le Colonel Gieta, blessé, et perdant tout son sang, lui donna le sien. Ainsi on remit deux fois à cheval, dans la fuite, ce conquérant qui n'avait pu y monter pendant la bataille. — p. 216.

Le roi alla par un autre chemin avec quelques cavaliers. Le carrosse où il était rompit dans la marche ; on le remit à cheval. Pour comble de disgrace, il s'égara pendant la nuit dans un bois ; là, son courage ne pouvant plus suppléer à ses forces épuisées, les douleurs de sa blessure devenues plus insupportables par la fatigue, son cheval étant tombé de lassitude, il se coucha quelques heures au pied d'un arbre, en danger d'être surpris à tout moment par les vainqueurs, qui le cherchaient de tous côtés. — p. 218.

I

'T was after dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede,
Around a slaughter'd army lay,
No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war,
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
And Moscow's walls were safe again,
Until a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year,
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one — a thunderbolt to all.

II

Such was the hazard of the die;
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;
For thousands fell that flight to aid:
And not a voice was heard t' upbraid
Ambition in his humbled hour,
When truth had nought to dread from power.
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
His own — and died the Russians' slave.
This too sinks after many a league
Of well-sustain'd, but vain fatigue;
And in the depth of forests darkling,
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling —
The beacons of surrounding foes —
A king must lay his limbs at length.
Are these the laurels and repose
For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,
In outworn nature's agony;
His wounds were stiff, his limbs were stark,
The heavy hour was chill and dark;
The fever in his blood forbade
A transient slumber's fitful aid.
And thus it was; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will:
All silent and subdued were they,
As once the nations round him lay.

III

A band of chiefs! — alas! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous. Upon the clay
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed,
For danger levels man and brute,
And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade —
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold.
But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,
And joy'd to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browse beneath the midnight dews:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board;
But spirited and docile too,
Whate'er was to be done, would do.
Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
All Tartar-like he carried him;
Obey'd his voice, and came to call,
And knew him in the midst of all:
Though thousands were around, — and Night,
Without a star, pursued her flight, —
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
Felt if his arms in order good
The long day's march had well withstood —
If still the powder fill'd the pan,
And flints unloosen'd kept their lock —
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt.
And next the venerable man,
From out his havresack and can,
Prepared and spread his slender stock;
And to the monarch and his men
The whole or portion offer'd then
With far less of inquietude
Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe.
And then he said: 'Of all our band,
Though firm of heart and strong of hand,
In skirmish, march, or forage, none
Can less have said or more have done

Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth
So fit a pair had never birth,
Since Alexander's days till now,
As thy Bucephalus and thou.
All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
For pricking on o'er flood and field.'
Mazeppa answer'd, 'Ill betide
The school wherein I learn'd to ride!'
Quoth Charles, 'Old Hetman, wherefore so,
Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?'
Mazeppa said, 'T were long to tell;
And we have many a league to go,
With every now and then a blow,
And ten to one at least the foe,
Before our steeds may graze at ease
Beyond the swift Borysthenes.
And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
And I will be the sentinel
Of this your troop.' — 'But I request,'
Said Sweden's monarch, 'thou wilt tell
This tale of thine, and I may reap,
Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;
For at this moment from my eyes
The hope of present slumber flies.'

'Well, sire, with such a hope, I 'll track
My seventy years of memory back.
I think 't was in my twentieth spring, —
Ay, 't was, — when Casimir was king —
John Casimir, — I was his page
Six summers, in my earlier age,
A learned monarch, faith! was he,
And most unlike your majesty:
He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again;
And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
He reign'd in most unseemly quiet.
Not that he had no cares to vex,
He loved the muses and the sex;
And sometimes these so froward are,
They made him wish himself at war;
But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
Another mistress, or new book.
And then he gave prodigious fêtes —
All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
To gaze upon his splendid court,
And dames, and chiefs, of princely port.
He was the Polish Solomon, —
So sung his poets, all but one,
Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
And boasted that he could not flatter.
It was a court of jousts and mimes,
Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
Even I for once produced some verses,
And sign'd my odes "Despairing Thyrsis."

There was a certain Palatine,
A count of far and high descent,
Rich as a salt or silver mine;
And he was proud, ye may divine,
As if from heaven he had been sent.
He had such wealth in blood and ore
As few could match beneath the throne;
And he would gaze upon his store,
And o'er his pedigree would pore,
Until by some confusion led,
Which almost look'd like want of head,
He thought their merits were his own.
His wife was not of his opinion —
His junior she by thirty years —
Grew daily tired of his dominion;
And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,
To virtue a few farewell tears,
A restless dream or two, some glances
At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,
Awaited but the usual chances
(Those happy accidents which render
The coldest dames so very tender),
To deck her Count with titles given,
'T is said, as passports into heaven;
But, strange to say, they rarely boast
Of these, who have deserved them most.

V

'I was a goodly stripling then;
At seventy years I so may say,
That there were few, or boys or men,
Who, in my dawning time of day,
Of vassal or of knight's degree,
Could vie in vanities with me.
For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
A port, not like to this ye see,
But smooth, as all is rugged now;
For time, and care, and war, have plough'd
My very soul from out my brow;
And thus I should be disavow'd
By all my kind and kin, could they
Compare my day and yesterday.
This change was wrought, too, long ere age
Had ta'en my features for his page:
With years, ye know, have not declined
My strength, my courage, or my mind,
Or at this hour I should not be
Telling old tales beneath a tree,
With starless skies my canopy.
But let me on: Theresa's form —
Methinks it glides before me now,
Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
The memory is so quick and warm;

And yet I find no words to tell
The shape of her I loved so well.
She had the Asiatic eye,
Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
Dark as above us is the sky;
But through it stole a tender light,
Like the first moonrise of midnight;
Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
Which seem'd to melt to its own beam;
All love, half languor, and half fire,
Like saints that at the stake expire,
And lift their raptured looks on high
As though it were a joy to die; —
A brow like a midsummer lake,
Transparent with the sun therein,
When waves no murmur dare to make,
And heaven beholds her face within; —
A cheek and lip — but why proceed?
I loved her then — I love her still;
And such as I am love indeed
In fierce extremes — in good and ill.
But still we love even in our rage,
And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past,
As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI

'We met, we gazed — I saw, and sigh'd;
She did not speak, and yet replied.
There are ten thousand tones and signs
We hear and see, but none defines —
Involuntary sparks of thought,
Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought
And form a strange intelligence
Alike mysterious and intense,
Which link the burning chain that binds,
Without their will, young hearts and minds;
Conveying, as the electric wire,
We know not how, the absorbing fire.
I saw, and sigh'd — in silence wept;
And still reluctant distance kept,
Until I was made known to her,
And we might then and there confer
Without suspicion — then, even then,
I long'd, and was resolved to speak;
But on my lips they died again,
The accents tremulous and weak,
Until one hour. — There is a game,
A frivolous and foolish play,
Wherewith we while away the day;
It is — I have forgot the name —
And we to this, it seems, were set,
By some strange chance, which I forget.
I reck'd not if I won or lost,
It was enough for me to be
So near to hear, and oh! to see
The being whom I loved the most.
I watch'd her as a sentinel
(May ours this dark night watch as well!),
Until I saw, and thus it was,
That she was pensive, nor perceived
Her occupation, nor was grieved
Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
Play'd on for hours, as if her will
Yet bound her to the place, though not
That hers might be the winning lot.
Then through my brain the thought did pass
Even as a flash of lightning there,
That there was something in her air
Which would not doom me to despair;
And on the thought my words broke forth,
All incoherent as they were —
Their eloquence was little worth,
But yet she listen'd — 'tis enough,
Who listens once will listen twice;
Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
And one refusal no rebuff.

VII

'I loved, and was beloved again —
They tell me, Sire, you never knew
Those gentle frailties; if 't is true,
I shorten all my joy or pain;
To you 't would seem absurd as vain:
But all men are not born to reign,
Or o'er their passions, or as you,
Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
I am — or rather *was* — a prince,
A chief of thousands, and could lead
Them on where each would foremost bleed;
But could not o'er myself evince
The like control. — But to resume:
I loved, and was beloved again;
In sooth, it is a happy doom,
But yet where happiest ends in pain.
We met in secret, and the hour
Which led me to that lady's bower
Was fiery Expectation's dower.
My days and nights were nothing, all
Except that hour which doth recall
In the long lapse from youth to age
No other like itself — I 'd give
The Ukraine back again to live
It o'er once more; and be a page,

The happy page, who was the lord
Of one soft heart and his own sword,
And had no other gem nor wealth
Save nature's gift of youth and health.
We met in secret — doubly sweet,
Some say, they find it so to meet;
I know not that — I would have given
My life but to have call'd her mine
In the full view of earth and heaven;
For I did oft and long repine
That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII

'For lovers there are many eyes,
And such there were on us; the devil
On such occasions should be civil;
The devil! — I 'm loth to do him wrong,
It might be some untoward saint,
Who would not be at rest too long
But to his pious bile gave vent —
But one fair night, some lurking spies
Surprised and seized us both.
The Count was something more than wroth;
I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
All cap-à-pie from head to heel,
What 'gainst their numbers could I do? —
'T was near his castle, far away
From city or from succour near,
And almost on the break of day.
I did not think to see another,
My moments seem'd reduced to few;
And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
And, it may be, a saint or two,
As I resign'd me to my fate,
They led me to the castle gate:
Theresa's doom I never knew,
Our lot was henceforth separate.
An angry man, ye may opine,
Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
And he had reason good to be,
But he was most enraged lest such
An accident should chance to touch
Upon his future pedigree;
Nor less amazed, that such a blot
His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
While he was highest of his line;
Because unto himself he seem'd
The first of men, nor less he deem'd
In others' eyes, and most in mine.
'Sdeath! with a *page* — perchance a king
Had reconciled him to the thing;
But with a stripling of a page!
I felt — but cannot paint his rage.

IX

'"Bring forth the horse!" — the horse was brought;
In truth, he was a noble steed,
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
Who look'd as though the speed of thought
Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
With spur and bridle undefiled —
'T was but a day he had been caught.
And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the full foam of wrath and dread
To me the desert-born was led.
They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong;
Then loosed him with a sudden lash:
Away! — away! — and on we dash! —
Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X

'Away! — away! — My breath was gone —
I saw not where he hurried on:
'T was scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foam'd — away! — away!
The last of human sounds which rose,
As I was darted from my foes,
Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
Which on the wind came roaring after
A moment from that rabble rout.
With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,
And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
And, writhing half my form about,
Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the tread,
The thunder of my courser's speed,
Perchance they did not hear nor heed:
It vexes me, for I would fain
Have paid their insult back again.
I paid it well in after days.
There is not of that castle gate,
Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;
Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall;
And many a time ye there might pass,
Nor dream that e'er that fortress was.
I saw its turrets in a blaze,
Their crackling battlements all cleft,
And the hot lead pour down like rain
From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,
Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.

They little thought that day of pain,
When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
They bade me to destruction dash,
That one day I should come again,
With twice five thousand horse, to thank
The Count for his uncourteous ride.
They play'd me then a bitter prank,
When, with the wild horse for my guide,
They bound me to his foaming flank.
At length I play'd them one as frank —
For time at last sets all things even —
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI

'Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind,
All human dwellings left behind;
We sped like meteors through the sky,
When with its crackling sound the night
Is chequer'd with the northern light.
Town — village — none were on our track,
But a wild plain of far extent,
And bounded by a forest black;
And, save the scarce seen battlement
On distant heights of some strong hold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man: the year before
A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod.
The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
And a low breeze crept moaning by —
I could have answer'd with a sigh;
But fast we fled, away, away —
And I could neither sigh nor pray;
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane.
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career:
At times I almost thought, indeed,
He must have slacken'd in his speed;
But no — my bound and slender frame
Was nothing to his angry might,
And merely like a spur became.
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony
Increased his fury and affright:
I tried my voice, — 't was faint and low,
But yet he swerved as from a blow;
And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's clang.
Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

XII

'We near'd the wild wood: 't was so wide,
I saw no bounds on either side;
'T was studded with old sturdy trees,
That bent not to the roughest breeze
Which howls down from Siberia's waste
And strips the forest in its haste;
But these were few and far between,
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
Ere strown by those autumnal eves
That nip the forest's foliage dead,
Discolour'd with a lifeless red,
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
Upon the slain when battle 's o'er,
And some long winter's night hath shed
Its frost o'er every tombless head,
So cold and stark the raven's beak
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek.
'T was a wild waste of underwood,
And here and there a chestnut stood,
The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
But far apart — and well it were,
Or else a different lot were mine:
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs; and I found strength to bear
My wounds already scarr'd with cold —
My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;
By night I heard them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop which can tire
The hound's deep hate and hunter's fire.
Where'er we flew they follow'd on,
Nor left us with the morning sun;
Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At day-break winding through the wood,
And through the night had heard their feet
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish — if it must be so —
At bay, destroying many a foe.
When first my courser's race begun,
I wish'd the goal already won;

But now I doubted strength and speed.
Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
Nor faster falls the blinding snow
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths he past —
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
All furious as a favour'd child
Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still,
A woman piqued who has her will.

XIII

'The wood was past; 't was more than noon,
But chill the air although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold —
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er.
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness
(Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattle-snake's in act to strike),
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,
I seem'd to sink upon the ground;
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther: he who dies
Can die no more than then I died.
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
I felt the blackness come and go,
And strove to wake; but could not make
My senses climb up from below.
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain;
But soon it pass'd, with little pain,
But a confusion worse than such:
I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again;
And yet I do suppose we must
Feel far more ere we turn to dust.
No matter; I have bared my brow
Full in Death's face — before — and now.

XIV

'My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,
And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
Life reassumed its lingering hold,
And throb by throb: till grown a pang
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood reflow'd though thick and chill;
My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight return'd, though dim, alas!
And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
Methought the dash of waves was nigh:
There was a gleam too of the sky,
Studded with stars; — it is no dream;
The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
And we are half-way, struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore.
The waters broke my hollow trance,
And with a temporary strength
My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
My courser's broad breast proudly braves
And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance!
We reach the slippery shore at length,
A haven I but little prized,
For all behind was dark and drear,
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew.

XV

'With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repelling bank.
We gain the top: a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the night,
And onward, onward, onward, seems,
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight;
And here and there a speck of white,

Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right.
But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate;
No twinkling taper from afar
Stood like a hospitable star;
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
To make him merry with my woes:
That very cheat had cheer'd me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

XVI

'Onward we went — but slack and slow;
His savage force at length o'erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went.
A sickly infant had had power
To guide him forward in that hour;
But useless all to me,
His new-born tameness nought avail'd —
My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd,
Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried
To rend the bonds so starkly tied,
But still it was in vain;
My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
Which but prolong'd their pain.
The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won:
Some streaks announced the coming sun —
How slow, alas, he came!
Methought that mist of dawning gray
Would never dapple into day;
How heavily it roll'd away —
Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And call'd the radiance from their cars,
And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII

'Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around — behind — before;
What booted it to traverse o'er
Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel, none of toil;
The very air was mute;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were — or seem'd — alone.
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!
I strove to cry — my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse — and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils never stretch'd by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet.
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answer'd, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable —
His first and last career is done!
On came the troop — they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong.
They stop — they start — they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide.
They snort — they foam — neigh — swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.
They left me there to my despair,
Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me — and there we lay
The dying on the dead!

I little deem'd another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.

'And there from morn till twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,
That makes us feel at length resign'd
To that which our foreboding years
Presents the worst and last of fears
Inevitable — even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon;
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare
That prudence might escape:
At times both wish'd for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,
And welcome in no shape.
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revell'd beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer oft than he
Whose heritage was misery:
For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,
Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
And, save the future (which is view'd
Not quite as men are base or good,
But as their nerves may be endued),
With nought perhaps to grieve: —
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.
To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;
To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour;
To-morrow would have given him power
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save —
And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII

'The sun was sinking — still I lay
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;
I thought to mingle there our clay;
And my dim eyes of death had need,
No hope arose of being freed.
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die
Ere his repast begun.
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
Together scared him off at length. —
I know no more — my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain —
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX

'I woke — Where was I? — Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie?
And is it mortal, yon bright eye
That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that the former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.
A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall:
The sparkle of her eye I caught,
Even with my first return of thought;
For ever and anon she threw
A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free.
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be;
But that I lived, and was released
From adding to the vulture's feast.
And when the Cossack maid beheld
My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,

She smiled — and I essay'd to speak,
But fail'd — and she approach'd, and made
With lip and finger signs that said,
I must not strive as yet to break
The silence, till my strength should be
Enough to leave my accents free.
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tiptoe tread,
And gently oped the door, and spake
In whispers — ne'er was voice so sweet!
Even music follow'd her light feet.
But those she call'd were not awake,
And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
Another look on me she cast,
Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all
Were near at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return: — while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone.

XX

'She came with mother and with sire —
What need of more? — I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack's guest.
They found me senseless on the plain,
They bore me to the nearest hut,
They brought me into life again,
Me — one day o'er their realm to reign!
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
His rage, refining on my pain,
Sent me forth to the wilderness,
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne, —
What mortal his own doom may guess?
Let none despond, let none despair!
To-morrow the Borysthenes
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank, — and never
Had I such welcome for a river
As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades, good night!' — The Hetman threw
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him who took his rest whene'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, *he* wonder'd not, —
The king had been an hour asleep.

## PROMETHEUS

[Publ. 1816]

TITAN! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refused thee even the boon to die:
The wretched gift eternity
Was thine — And thou hast borne it well.
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;

And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny,
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself — and equal to all woes,
And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own concenter'd recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

## BEPPO

### A VENETIAN STORY

[Publ. 1817]

'*Rosalind.* Farewell, Monsieur Traveller: Look, you lisp, and wear strange suits: disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your Nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think you have swam in a *Gondola*.'

*As You Like It*, Act IV. Scene 1.

*Annotation of the Commentators.*

'That is, been at *Venice*, which was much visited by the young English gentlemen of those times, and was then what *Paris* is *now*, — the seat of all dissoluteness.'

S. A. [Samuel Ayscough.]

I

'T is known, at least it should be, that throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
The people take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
However high their rank or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masquing,
And other things which may be had for asking.

II

The moment night with dusky mantle covers
The skies (and the more duskily the better),
The time less liked by husbands than by lovers
Begins, and prudery flings aside her fetter;
And gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
Giggling with all the gallants who beset her;
And there are songs and quavers, roaring, humming,
Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.

III

And there are dresses splendid, but fantastical,
Masks of all times and nations, Turks and Jews,
And harlequins and clowns, with feats gymnastical,
Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and Hindoos;
All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,
All people, as their fancies hit, may choose,
But no one in these parts may quiz the clergy, —
Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I charge ye.

IV

You 'd better walk about begirt with briars,
Instead of coat and smallclothes, than put on
A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
Although you swore it only was in fun;
They 'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires
Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
Nor say one mass to cool the caldron's bubble
That boil'd your bones, unless you paid them double.

V

But saving this, you may put on whate'er
You like by way of doublet, cape, or cloak,
Such as in Monmouth-street, or in Rag Fair,
Would rig you out in seriousness or joke;
And even in Italy such places are,
With prettier name in softer accents spoke,
For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
No place that 's call'd 'Piazza' in Great Britain.

VI

This feast is named the Carnival, which being
Interpreted, implies 'farewell to flesh:'
So call'd, because, the name and thing agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt and fresh.
But why they usher Lent with so much glee in,
Is more than I can tell, although I guess
'T is as we take a glass with friends at parting,
In the stage-coach or packet, just at starting.

VII

And thus they bid farewell to carnal dishes,
And solid meats, and highly spiced ragouts,
To live for forty days on ill-dress'd fishes,
Because they have no sauces to their stews,
A thing which causes many 'poohs' and 'pishes,'
And several oaths (which would not suit the Muse),
From travellers accustom'd from a boy
To eat their salmon, at the least, with soy.

VIII

And therefore humbly I would recommend
'The curious in fish-sauce,' before they cross
The sea, to bid their cook, or wife, or friend,
Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in gross
(Or if set out beforehand, these may send
By any means least liable to loss),
Ketchup, Soy, Chili-vinegar, and Harvey,
Or, by the Lord! a Lent will well-nigh starve ye;

IX

That is to say, if your religion 's Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans do,
According to the proverb, — although no man,
If foreign, is obliged to fast; and you,
If Protestant, or sickly, or a woman;
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout —
Dine and be d—d! I don't mean to be coarse,
But that 's the penalty, to say no worse.

X

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball,
And masque, and mime, and mystery, and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore, —
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory.

XI

They 've pretty faces yet, those same Venetians,
Black eyes, arch'd brows, and sweet expressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimick'd ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best 's at Florence — see it, if ye will),
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepp'd from out a picture by Giorgione,

XII

Whose tints are truth and beauty at their best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that 's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
'T is but a portrait of his son, and wife,
And self; but *such* a woman! love in life!

XIII

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet model must have been the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
Wer't not impossible, besides a shame.
The face recalls some face, as 't were with pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;

XIV

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young and fix our eyes on every face;
And, oh! the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,

The youth, the bloom, the beauty which agree,
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
Particularly seen from a balcony
(For beauty 's sometimes best set off afar),
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the bar;
And, truth to say, they 're mostly very pretty,
And rather like to show it, more 's the pity!

XVI

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heel'd Mercuries
Who do such things because they know no better;
And then, God knows what mischief may arise
When love links two young people in one fetter,
Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows and hearts and heads.

XVII

Shakspeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could inflame
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a 'cavalier servente.'

XVIII

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's
Which smothers women in a bed of feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fellows;
When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or another's.

XIX

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I 'll describe it you exactly:
'T is a long cover'd boat that 's common here,
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly;
Row'd by two rowers, each call'd 'Gondolier,'
It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
Where none can make out what you say or do.

XX

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow;
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe, —
But not to them do woful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral 's done.

XXI

But to my story. — 'T was some years ago,
It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The carnival was at its height, and so
Were all kinds of buffoonery and dress;
A certain lady went to see the show,
Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we 'll call her Laura, if you please,
Because it slips into my verse with ease.

XXII

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
Which certain people call a '*certain age*,'
Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
Because I never heard, nor could engage
A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
To name, define by speech, or write on page,
The period meant precisely by that word, —
Which surely is exceedingly absurd.

XXIII

Laura was blooming still, had made the best
Of time, and time return'd the compliment
And treated her genteelly, so that, dress'd,
She look'd extremely well where'er she went;
A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent;
Indeed she shone all smiles, and seem'd to flatter
Mankind with her black eyes for looking at her.

XXIV

She was a married woman; 't is convenient,
Because in Christian countries 't is a rule
To view their little slips with eyes more lenient;
Whereas if single ladies play the fool
(Unless within the period intervenient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool),
I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.

XXV

Her husband sail'd upon the Adriatic,
And made some voyages, too, in other seas,
And when he lay in quarantine for pratique
(A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
His wife would mount, at times, her highest attic,
For thence she could discern the ship with ease:
He was a merchant trading to Aleppo,
His name Giuseppe, call'd more briefly, Beppo.

XXVI

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though colour'd, as it were, within a tan-yard,
He was a person both of sense and vigour —
A better seaman never yet did man yard:
And *she*, although her manners show'd no rigour,
Was deem'd a woman of the strictest principle,
So much as to be thought almost invincible.

XXVII

But several years elapsed since they had met;
Some people thought the ship was lost, and some
That he had somehow blunder'd into debt,
And did not like the thought of steering home:
And there were several offer'd any bet,
Or that he would, or that he would not come,
For most men (till by losing render'd sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.

XXVIII

'T is said that their last parting was pathetic,
As partings often are, or ought to be,
And their presentiment was quite prophetic
That they should never more each other see
(A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
Which I have known occur in two or three),
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee,
He left this Adriatic Ariadne.

XXIX

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
And thought of wearing weeds, as well she might;
She almost lost all appetite for victual,
And could not sleep with ease alone at night;
She deem'd the window-frames and shutters brittle
Against a daring housebreaker or sprite,
And so she thought it prudent to connect her
With a vice-husband, *chiefly to protect her.*

XXX

She chose (and what is there they will not choose,
If only you will but oppose their choice?),
Till Beppo should return from his long cruise
And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice,
A man some women like, and yet abuse —
A coxcomb was he by the public voice;
A Count of wealth, they said, as well as quality,
And in his pleasures of great liberality.

XXXI

And then he was a Count, and then he knew
Music, and dancing, fiddling, French and Tuscan;
The last not easy, be it known to you,
For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
He was a critic upon operas, too,
And knew all niceties of the sock and buskin;
And no Venetian audience could endure a
Song, scene, or air, when he cried 'seccatura!

XXXII

His 'bravo' was decisive, for that sound
Hush'd 'Academie' sigh'd in silent awe;
The fiddlers trembled as he look'd around,
For fear of some false note's detected flaw.
The 'prima donna's' tuneful heart would bound,
Dreading the deep damnation of his 'bah!'
Soprano, basso, even the contra-alto,
Wish'd him five fathom under the Rialto.

XXXIII

He patronised the Improvisatori,
Nay, could himself extemporise some stanzas,
Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story,
Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as
Italians can be, though in this their glory
Must surely yield the palm to that which France has;
In short, he was a perfect cavaliero,
And to his very valet seem'd a hero.

XXXIV

Then he was faithful, too, as well as amorous,
So that no sort of female could complain,
Although they're now and then a little clamorous;
He never put the pretty souls in pain;
His heart was one of those which most enamour us,
Wax to receive, and marble to retain.
He was a lover of the good old school,
Who still become more constant as they cool.

XXXV

No wonder such accomplishments should turn
A female head, however sage and steady,
With scarce a hope that Beppo could return, —
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor show'd the least concern,
And she had waited several years already;
And really if a man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's *dead*, or should be so.

XXXVI

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman
(Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin),
'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men;
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
But 'Cavalier Serventes' are quite common,
And no one notices, nor cares a pin;
And we may call this (not to say the worst)
A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*.

XXXVII

The word was formerly a 'Cicisbeo,'
But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent;
The Spaniards call the person a '*Cortejo*,'
For the same mode subsists in Spain, though recent;
In short it reaches from the Po to Teio,
And may perhaps at last be o'er the sea sent.
But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses!
Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

XXXVIII

However, I still think, with all due deference
To the fair *single* part of the Creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In *tête-à-tête* or general conversation —
And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation —
Because they know the world, and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX

'T is true, your budding Miss is very charming,
But shy and awkward at first coming out,
So much alarm'd that she is quite alarming,
All Giggle, Blush; half Pertness and half Pout;
And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there 's harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about,
The Nursery still lisps out in all they utter —
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

XL

But 'Cavalier Servente' is the phrase
Used in politest circles to express
This supernumerary slave, who stays
Close to the lady as a part of dress,
Her word the only law which he obeys.
His is no sinecure, as you may guess;
Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,
And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

XLI

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy 's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree
Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a play
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of France.

XLII

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;
I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with *grapes* red wagons choke the way, —
In England 't would be dung, dust, or a dray.

XLIII

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he 'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven t' himself; that day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky caldron simmers.

XLIV

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we 're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy
But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

XLVI

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeath'd us? — in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the lyre,

Would *words* describe thy past and present glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

XLVII

'England! with all thy faults I love thee still,'
I said at Calais and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we 've got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 't is not too late;

XLVIII

I like the taxes, when they 're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year.
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and every thing.

XLIX

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little riots just to show we 're free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

L

But to my tale of Laura, — for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease —
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.

LI

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,
How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with western sentimentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.

LII

But I am but a nameless sort of person
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels),
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I 've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion — so here goes.

LIII

The Count and Laura made their new arrangement,
Which lasted, as arrangements sometimes do,
For half a dozen years without estrangement;
They had their little differences, too;
Those jealous whiffs, which never any change meant:
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of squabble,
From sinners of high station to the rabble.

LIV

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make them;
The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
Their chains so slight, 't was not worth while to break them:
The world beheld them with indulgent air;
The pious only wish'd 'the devil take them!'
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old sinners to be young ones' baits.

LV

But they were young: Oh! what without our youth
Would love be! What would youth be without love!

Youth lends it joy, and sweetness, vigour, truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from above;
But, languishing with years, it grows uncouth —
One of few things experience don't improve,
Which is, perhaps, the reason why old fellows
Are always so preposterously jealous.

LVI

It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind 's made up to go
To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,
Spectator or partaker in the show;
The only difference known between the cases
Is — *here*, we have six weeks of 'varnish'd faces.'

LVII

Laura, when dress'd, was (as I sang before)
A pretty woman as was ever seen,
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the fashions which the last month wore,
Colour'd, and silver paper leaved between
That and the title-page, for fear the press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts of dress.

LVIII

They went to the Ridotto; — 't is a hall
Where people dance, and sup, and dance again;
Its proper name, perhaps, were a masqued ball,
But that 's of no importance to my strain;
'T is (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
Excepting that it can't be spoilt by rain:
The company is 'mix'd' (the phrase I quote is
As much as saying, they 're below your notice);

LIX

For a 'mix'd company' implies that, save
Yourself and friends and half a hundred more
Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
Of public places, where they basely brave
The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons, call'd '*the World*;' but I,
Although I know them, really don't know why.

LX

This is the case in England; at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated imitators: — how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!
The demagogues of fashion: all below
Is frail; how easily the world is lost
By love, or war, and now and then by frost!

LXI

Crush'd was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knock'd his army down with icy hammer,
Stopp'd by the *elements*, like a whaler, or
A blundering novice in his new French grammar;
Good cause had he to doubt the chance of war,
And as for Fortune — but I dare not d—n her,
Because, were I to ponder to infinity,
The more I should believe in her divinity.

LXII

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and marriage;
I cannot say that she 's done much for me yet;
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage,
We 've not yet closed accounts, and we shall see yet
How much she 'll make amends for past miscarriage;
Meantime the goddess I 'll no more importune,
Unless to thank her when she 's made my fortune.

LXIII

To turn, — and to return; — the devil take it!
This story slips for ever through my fingers,

Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be — and so it rather lingers;
This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
But must keep time and tune like public singers;
But if I once get through my present measure,
I'll take another when I'm next at leisure.

LXIV

They went to the Ridotto ('t is a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
Because I'm rather hippish, and may borrow
Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my sorrow
Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or find,
Something shall leave it half an hour behind).

LXV

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips;
To some she whispers, others speaks aloud;
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips,
Complains of warmth, and, this complaint avow'd,
Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being dress'd so ill.

LXVI

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third — where did she buy that frightful turban?
A fourth 's so pale she fears she 's going to faint,
A fifth's look 's vulgar, dowdyish, and suburban,
A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin muslin surely will be her bane,
And lo! an eighth appears, — 'I'll see no more!'
For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach a score.

LXVII

Meantime, while she was thus at others gazing,
Others were levelling their looks at her;
She heard the men's half-whisper'd mode of praising,
And, till 't was done, determined not to stir;
The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of life, so many were
Admirers still, — but men are so debased,
Those brazen creatures always suit their taste.

LXVIII

For my part, now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty women — but I won't discuss
A thing which is a scandal to the land,
I only don't see why it should be thus;
And if I were but in a gown and band,
Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily.

LXIX

While Laura thus was seen and seeing, smiling,
Talking, she knew not why and cared not what,
So that her female friends, with envy broiling,
Beheld her airs and triumph, and all that;
And well dress'd males still kept before her filing,
And passing bow'd and mingled with her chat;
More than the rest one person seem'd to stare
With pertinacity that 's rather rare.

LXX

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany;
And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
Because the Turks so much admire philogyny,
Although their usage of their wives is sad;
'T is said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman whom they purchase like a pad:

They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four wives by law, and concubines 'ad libitum.'

LXXI

They lock them up, and veil, and guard them daily,
They scarcely can behold their male relations,
So that their moments do not pass so gaily
As is supposed the case with northern nations;
Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely:
And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
Their days are either pass'd in doing nothing,
Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

LXXII

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse;
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews, —
In harams learning soon would make a pretty schism!
But luckily these beauties are no 'Blues,'
No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
'That charming passage in the last new poem, —'

LXXIII

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
Small 'Triton of the minnows,' the sublime
Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
The echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards — in short, a fool, —

LXXIV

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving '*Good!*' (by no means GOOD in law),
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

LXXV

One hates an author that's *all author*, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the midnight taper.

LXXVI

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world, who know the world like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the children of the 'mighty mother's,'
The would-be wits and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily 'tea is ready,'
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

LXXVII

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention
Have none of these instructive pleasant people,
And *one* to them would seem a new invention,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
I think 't would almost be worth while to pension
(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)
A missionary author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXVIII

No chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No metaphysics are let loose in lectures,

No circulating library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematics.

LXXIX

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,
I 'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX

Oh, Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!
Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
I love you both, and both shall have my praise:
Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy!—
Meantime I drink to your return in brandy.

LXXXI

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, 'Madam, I do you honour,
And while I please to stare, you 'll please to stay:'
Could staring win a woman, this had won her,
But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle
Even at this stranger's most outlandish ogle.

LXXXII

The morning now was on the point of breaking,
A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking
The ball-room ere the sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,
His blushes make them look a little pale.

LXXXIII

I 've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stay'd them over for some silly reason,
And then I look'd (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season;
And though I 've seen some thousands in their prime,
Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the dawn.

LXXXIV

The name of this Aurora I 'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was naught to me
More than that patent work of God's invention,
A charming woman whom we like to see;
But writing names would merit reprehension,
Yet if you like to find out this fair *she*,
At the next London or Parisian ball
You still may mark her cheek, out-blooming all.

LXXXV

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,
When lo! those cursèd gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*.

LXXXVI

In this they 're like our coachmen, and the cause
Is much the same — the crowd, and pulling, hauling,
With blasphemies enough to break their jaws,
They make a never intermitting bawling.
At home, our Bow-street gemmen keep the laws,
And here a sentry stands within your calling;
But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing.

LXXXVII

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,
Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The dancers and their dresses, too, beside;
Some little scandals eke: but all aghast
(As to their palace stairs the rowers glide)
Sate Laura by the side of her Adorer,
When lo ! the Mussulman was there before her.

LXXXVIII

'Sir,' said the Count, with brow exceeding grave,
'Your unexpected presence here will make
It necessary for myself to crave
Its import ? But perhaps 't is a mistake;
I hope it is so; and, at once to wave
All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake;
You understand my meaning, or you *shall*.'
'Sir' (quoth the Turk), ''t is no mistake at all.

LXXXIX

'That lady is *my wife !*' Much wonder paints
The lady's changing cheek, as well it might;
But where an Englishwoman sometimes faints,
Italian females don't do so outright;
They only call a little on their saints,
And then come to themselves, almost or quite;
Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

XC

She said, — what could she say ? Why, not a word:
But the Count courteously invited in
The stranger, much appeased by what he heard:
'Such things, perhaps, we 'd best discuss within,'
Said he; 'don't let us make ourselves absurd
In public by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole transaction.'

XCI

They enter'd and for coffee call'd — it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians both,
Although the way they make it 's not the same.
Now Laura, much recover'd, or less loth
To speak, cries 'Beppo ! what 's your pagan name ?
Bless me ! your beard is of amazing growth !
And how came you to keep away so long ?
Are you not sensible 't was very wrong ?

XCII

'And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk ?
With any other women did you wive ?
Is 't true they use their fingers for a fork ?
Well, that 's the prettiest shawl — as I 'm alive !
You 'll give it me ? They say you eat no pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To — bless me ! did I ever ? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow ! How 's your liver ?

XCIII

'Beppo ! that beard of yours becomes you not;
It shall be shaved before you 're a day older:
Why do you wear it ? Oh, I had forgot —
Pray don't you think the weather here is colder ?

How do I look? You shan't stir from this spot
In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder
Should find you out, and make the story known.
How short your hair is! Lord, how grey it 's grown!'

XCIV

What answer Beppo made to these demands
Is more than I know. He was cast away
About where Troy stood once, and nothing stands;
Became a slave of course, and for his pay
Had bread and bastinadoes, till some bands
Of pirates landing in a neighbouring bay,
He join'd the rogues and prosper'd and became
A renegado of indifferent fame.

XCV

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so
Keen the desire to see his home again,
He thought himself in duty bound to do so,
And not be always thieving on the main;
Lonely he felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,
And so he hired a vessel come from Spain,
Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,
Mann'd with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco.

XCVI

Himself, and much (heaven knows how gotten!) cash
He then embark'd with risk of life and limb,
And got clear off, although the attempt was rash;
*He* said that *Providence* protected him —
For my part, I say nothing, lest we clash
In our opinions: — well, the ship was trim,
Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on,
Except three days of calm when off Cape Bonn.

XCVII

They reach'd the island, he transferr'd his lading
And self and live-stock to another bottom,
And pass'd for a true Turkey-merchant, trading
With goods of various names, but I forgot 'em.
However, he got off by this evading,
Or else the people would perhaps have shot him;
And thus at Venice landed to reclaim
His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

XCVIII

His wife received, the patriarch re-baptized him
(He made the church a present, by the way);
He then threw off the garments which disguised him,
And borrow'd the Count's smallclothes for a day:
His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
Finding he 'd wherewithal to make them gay,
With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,
For stories — but *I* don't believe the half of them.

XCIX

Whate'er his youth had suffer'd, his old age
With wealth and talking make him some amends;
Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
I 've heard the Count and he were always friends.
My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finish'd, here the story ends;
'T is to be wish'd it had been sooner done,
But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

## DON JUAN

[Publ. 1818 ff.]

### CANTO III. LXXXVI

#### SONG

#### THE ISLES OF GREECE

I

THE isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!

Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

3

The mountains look on Marathon —
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations; — all were his!
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set where were they?

5

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now —
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

7

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no; — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise, — we come, we come!'
'T is but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain — in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served — but served Polycrates —
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
*That* tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks —
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

## CANTO III. CI–CVIII

### AVE MARIA

CI

T' our tale. — The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;
The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired; —
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

CII

Ave Maria! blessèd be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer.

CIII

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!
Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of love!
Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove —
What though 'tis but a pictured image? — strike —
That painting is no idol, — 'tis too like.

CIV

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print — that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars, — all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

CV

Sweet hour of twilight! — in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

CVI

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover, — shadow'd my mind's eye.

CVII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things —
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,

To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

CVIII

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

## CANTO IV. XII–LXXIII

### THE DEATH OF HAIDÉE

XII

'Whom the gods love die young,' was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays even more —
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,
Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save.

XIII

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead —
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to condemn:
Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
And knew such brightness was but the reflection
Of their exchanging glances of affection.

XIV

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much;
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard, —

XV

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
And children still they should have ever been;
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her beloved, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
And never know the weight of human hours.

XVI

Moons changing had roll'd on, and changeless found
Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
And these were not of the vain kind which cloys,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

XVII

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!
But theirs was love in which the mind delights

To lose itself when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its lack sounds and sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a wh—re.

XVIII

Hard words; harsh truth; a truth which many know.
Enough.—The faithful and the fairy pair,
Who never found a single hour too slow,
What was it made them thus exempt from care?
Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were
Inherent—what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic.

XIX

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,
But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,
For Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no reason for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or doves.

XX

They gazed upon the sunset; 't is an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to *their* eyes,
For it had made them what they were: the power
Of love had first o'erwhelm'd them from such skies,
When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them link'd in passion's ties;
Charm'd with each other, all things charm'd that brought
The past still welcome as the present thought.

XXI

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,
And swept, as 't were, across their hearts' delight,
Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,
When one is shook in sound, and one in sight;
And thus some boding flash'd through either frame,
And called from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,
While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

XXII

That large black prophet eye seem'd to dilate
And follow far the disappearing sun,
As if their last day of a happy date
With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone;
Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate—
He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,
His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

XXIII

She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that sort
Which makes not others smile; then turn'd aside:
Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,
And master'd by her wisdom or her pride;
When Juan spoke, too—it might be in sport—
Of this their mutual feeling, she replied—
'If it should be so,—but—it cannot be—
Or I at least shall not survive to see.'

XXIV

Juan would question further, but she press'd
His lip to hers, and silenced him with this,
And then dismiss'd the omen from her breast,
Defying augury with that fond kiss;
And no doubt of all methods 't is the best:
Some people prefer wine—'t is not amiss;

I have tried both; so those who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache.

XXV

One of the two, according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you 'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
But which to choose, I really hardly know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons show,
And then decide, without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.

XXVI

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless tenderness,
Which mix'd all feelings, friend, child, lover, brother,
All that the best can mingle and express
When two pure hearts are pour'd in one another,
And love too much, and yet can not love less;
But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

XXVII

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
Why did they not then die? — they had lived too long
Should an hour come to bid them breathe apart;
Years could but bring them cruel things or wrong;
The world was not for them, nor the world's art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
It was their very spirit — not a sense.

XXVIII

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care:
How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

XXIX

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;
And Haidée's sweet lips murmur'd like a brook
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirr'd with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air.

XXX

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind —
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can bind;
Strange state of being! (for 't is still to be)
Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see.

XXXI

She dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,
Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high —
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

XXXII

Anon — she was released, and then she stray'd
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,

And stumbled almost every step she made;
And something roll'd before her in a sheet,
Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
'T was white and indistinct, nor stopp'd to meet
Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed, and grasp'd,
And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

XXXIII

The dream changed: — in a cave she stood, its walls
Were hung with marble icicles, the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk;
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks look'd below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell, — she thought.

XXXIV

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead brow,
Which she essay'd in vain to clear (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seem'd they now!),
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
Of his quench'd heart; and the sea dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

XXXV

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or alter'd into something new —
Like to her father's features, till each trace
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew —
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?
Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'T is — 't is her father's — fix'd upon the pair!

XXXVI

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell
With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
Him whom she deem'd a habitant where dwell
The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
Perchance the death of one she loved too well:
Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
It was a moment of that awful kind —
I have seen such — but must not call to mind.

XXXVII

Up Juan sprung to Haidée's bitter shriek,
And caught her falling, and from off the wall
Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
Vengeance on him who was the cause of all:
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my call,
A thousand scimitars await the word;
Put up, young man, put up your silly sword.'

XXXVIII

And Haidée clung around him; 'Juan, 't is —
'T is Lambro — 't is my father! Kneel with me —
He will forgive us — yes — it must be — yes.
Oh! dearest father, in this agony
Of pleasure and of pain — even while I kiss
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy.'

XXXIX

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye —
Not always signs with him of calmest mood:
He look'd upon her, but gave no reply;
Then turn'd to Juan, in whose cheek the blood
Oft came and went, as there resolved to die;

In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

XL

'Young man, your sword;' so Lambro once more said:
Juan replied, 'Not while this arm is free.'
The old man's cheek grew pale, but not with dread,
And drawing from his belt a pistol, he
Replied, 'Your blood be then on your own head.'
Then look'd close at the flint, as if to see
'T was fresh — for he had lately used the lock —
And next proceeded quietly to cock.

XLI

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;
A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
If you have got a former friend for foe;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

XLII

Lambro presented, and one instant more
Had stopp'd this Canto, and Don Juan's breath,
When Haidée threw herself her boy before;
Stern as her sire: 'On me,' she cried, 'let death
Descend — the fault is mine; this fatal shore
He found — but sought not. I have pledged my faith;
I love him — I will die with him: I knew
Your nature's firmness — know your daughter's too.'

XLIII

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy; but now
She stood as one who champion'd human fears —
Pale, statue-like, and stern, she woo'd the blow;
And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
She drew up to her height, as if to show
A fairer mark; and with a fix'd eye scann'd
Her father's face — but never stopp'd his hand.

XLIV

He gazed on her, and she on him; 't was strange
How like they look'd! the expression was the same;
Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame;
For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
If cause should be — a lioness, though tame.
Her father's blood before her father's face
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

XLV

I said they were alike, their features and
Their stature, differing but in sex and years;
Even to the delicacy of their hand
There was resemblance, such as true blood wears;
And now to see them, thus divided, stand
In fix'd ferocity, when joyous tears
And sweet sensations should have welcomed both,
Show what the passions are in their full growth.

XLVI

The father paused a moment, then withdrew
His weapon, and replaced it; but stood still,
And looking on her, as to look her through,
'Not *I*,' he said, 'have sought this stranger's ill;
Not *I* have made this desolation: few
Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill;
But I must do my duty — how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

XLVII

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
His own shall roll before you like a ball!'
He raised his whistle, as the word he said,
And blew; another answer'd to the call,
And rushing in disorderly, though led,
And arm'd from boot to turban, one and all,

Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word, — 'Arrest or slay the Frank.'

XLVIII

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew
His daughter; while compress'd within his clasp,
'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father's grasp —
His arms were like a serpent's coil: then flew
Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates; save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

XLIX

The second had his cheek laid open; but
The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
His own well in; so well, ere you could look,
His man was floor'd, and helpless at his foot,
With the blood running like a little brook
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red —
One on the arm, the other on the head.

L

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore
Juan from the apartment: with a sign
Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.
They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reach'd some galliots, placed in line;
On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stow'd him, with strict orders to the watches.

LI

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:
A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,
Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing is suddenly to sea sent,
Wounded and chain'd, so that he cannot move,
And all because a lady fell in love.

LII

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea:
'T is pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

LIII

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Naïad of the Phlegethontic rill!
Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but *rack*
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

LIV

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe —
Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;
Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom bounded?
She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued because surrounded;
Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

LV

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble fonts; there grain, and flower, and fruit,
Gush from the earth until the land runs o'er;
But there, too, many a poison-tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,

Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

LVI

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
Her human clay is kindled; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,
And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:
Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's dower;
But her large dark eye show'd deep Passion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

LVII

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,
Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth, and fair,
Till slowly charged with thunder they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;
But overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

LVIII

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermaster'd and cut down;
His blood was running on the very floor
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own;
Thus much she view'd an instant and no more, —
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan;
On her sire's arm, which until now scarce held
Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell'd.

LIX

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;
And her head droop'd as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd handmaids bore
Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

LX

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill —
With nothing livid, still her lips were red;
She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent still;
No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely dead;
Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of soul —
She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

LXI

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,
But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect throws
O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;
O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

LXII

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

XLIII

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;

She saw them watch her without asking why,
And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

LXIV

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
She recognized no being, and no spot,
However dear or cherish'd in their day;
They changed from room to room — but all forgot —
Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful meaning.

LXV

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he begun a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

LXVI

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being; in a gushing stream
The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolved in rain.

LXVII

Short solace, vain relief! — thought came too quick,
And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
Although her paroxysm drew towards its close; —
Her's was a phrensy which disdain'd to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

LXVIII

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;
Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Avail'd for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep — the power seem'd gone for ever.

LXIX

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus; at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her past:
And they who watch'd her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes — the beautiful, the black —
Oh! to possess such lustre — and then lack!

LXX

She died, but not alone; she held within
A second principle of life, which might
Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of sin;
But closed its little being without light,
And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
Blossom and bough lie wither'd with one blight;

In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.

LXXI

Thus lived — thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth: her days and pleasures were
Brief, but delightful — such as had not staid
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

LXXII

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd away;
None but her own and father's grave is there,
And nothing outward tells of human clay;
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

LXXIII

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
Sighs o'er her name; and many an islander
With her sire's story makes the night less long;
Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with her:
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong —
A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

# PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

## ALASTOR

OR

## THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

[Publ. 1816]

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam,
quærebam quid amarem, amans amare.
*Confessions of St. Augustine.*

Mrs. Shelley, in her account of *Alastor*, writes as follows: "None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude — the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspect of the visible universe inspires, with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts, give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near, he here represented in such colors as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death."

Shelley himself, in his *Preface*, outlines the character of the story: "The poem entitled *Alastor* may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sink profoundly into the frame of his conceptions and afford to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous and tranquil and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful or wise or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave."

Earth, Ocean, Air, belovèd brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If Autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And Winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the gray grass and bare boughs;
If Spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
Her first sweet kisses, — have been dear to me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive
This boast, belovèd brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favor now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favor my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
And my heart ever gazes on the depth
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange tears,
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
Such magic as compels the charmèd night

To render up thy charge; and, though ne'er yet
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday thought,
Has shone within me, that serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
May modulate with murmurs of the air,
And motions of the forests and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence reared,
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:
A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:
Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn bard
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
He lived, he died, he sung in solitude.
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision and bright silver dream
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had passed, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
The red volcano overcanopies
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes
On black bare pointed islets ever beat
With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves,
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
And the green earth, lost in his heart its claims
To love and wonder; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste

Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk
Or jasper tomb or mutilated sphinx,
Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble daemons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth: through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
From duties and repose to tend his steps,
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love, and watched his nightly sleep,
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
Of innocent dreams arose; then, when red morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home
Wildered, and wan; and panting, she returned.

The Poet, wandering on, through Arabie,
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the aërial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way;
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veilèd maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-colored woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
A permeating fire; wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
Subdued by its own pathos; her fair hands
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
The beating of her heart was heard to fill
The pauses of her music, and her breath
Tumultuously accorded with those fits
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
As if her heart impatiently endured
Its bursting burden; at the sound he turned,
And saw by the warm light of their own life
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.
His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs, and quelled

His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom : — she drew back awhile,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock, he started from his trance —
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
The spirit of sweet human love has sent
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
He overleaps the bounds. Alas! alas!
Were limbs and breath and being intertwined
Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, forever lost
In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake
Lead only to a black and watery depth,
While death's blue vault with loathliest vapors hung,
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart;
The insatiate hope which it awakened stung
His brain even like despair.

While daylight held
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
With his still soul. At night the passion came,
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
Into the darkness. As an eagle, grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
O'er the wide aëry wilderness: thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,
He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
Day after day, a weary waste of hours,
Bearing within his life the brooding care
That ever fed on its decaying flame.
And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair,
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering,
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone,
As in a furnace burning secretly,

From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who ministered with human charity
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of Wind,
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In its career; the infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream
Of after times; but youthful maidens, taught
By nature, would interpret half the woe
That wasted him, would call him with false names
Brother and friend, would press his pallid hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight: — 'Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird! thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts?' A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts, he looked around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny; sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.
Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat; he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
The straining boat. A whirlwind swept it on,
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafèd sea.
The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.

Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
With dark obliterating course, he sate:
As if their genii were the ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those belovèd eyes, the Poet sate,
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on;
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of Day;
Night followed, clad with stars. On every side
More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean; safely fled —
As if that frail and wasted human form
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight
The moon arose; and lo! the ethereal cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves
Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound forever. — Who shall save? —
The boat fled on, — the boiling torrent drove, —
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,
The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
The little boat was driven. A cavern there
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths
Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on
With unrelaxing speed. — 'Vision and Love!'
The Poet cried aloud, 'I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long.'

The boat pursued
The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone
At length upon that gloomy river's flow;
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm:
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarlèd roots
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,
Reflecting yet distorting every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round and round and round,
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where through an opening of the rocky bank
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet 'mid those battling tides
Is left, the boat paused shuddering. — Shall it sink
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress
Of that resistless gulf embosom it?
Now shall it fall? — A wandering stream of wind
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
And, lo! with gentle motion between banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,

Beneath a woven grove, it sails, and, hark!
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.
Where the embowering trees recede, and leave
A little space of green expanse, the cove
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers
Forever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,
Which naught but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
But on his heart its solitude returned,
And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame,
Had yet performed its ministry; it hung
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
Of night close over it.

The noonday sun
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
Scooped in the dark base of their aëry rocks,
Mocking its moans, respond and roar forever.
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as, led
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt some bank,
Her cradle and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia floating hang
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,
With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves
Make network of the dark blue light of day
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose twined with jasmine
A soul-dissolving odor to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like vaporous shapes half-seen; beyond, a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky darting between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star,
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,
Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected lines
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard

The motion of the leaves — the grass that sprung
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
An unaccustomed presence — and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed
To stand beside him — clothed in no bright robes
Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;
But undulating woods, and silent well,
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was; only — when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness — two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him.

Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
The windings of the dell. The rivulet,
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony
Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones
It danced, like childhood laughing as it went;
Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept,
Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness. — 'O stream!
Whose source is inaccessibly profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,
Thy searchless fountain and invisible course,
Have each their type in me; and the wide sky
And measureless ocean may declare as soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud
Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
I' the passing wind!'

Beside the grassy shore
Of the small stream he went; he did impress
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch
Of fever, he did move; yet not like him
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he went
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
The struggling brook; tall spires of windlestrae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but gnarlèd roots of ancient pines
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs: — so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. Calm he still pursued
The stream, that with a larger volume now

Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and its precipice
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems with its accumulated crags
To overhang the world; for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-colored even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
Yielding one only response at each pause
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
Fell into that immeasurable void,
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

Yet the gray precipice and solemn pine
And torrent were not all; — one silent nook
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
It overlooked in its serenity
The dark earth and the bending vault of stars.
It was a tranquil spot that seemed to smile
Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,
And did embower with leaves forever green
And berries dark the smooth and even space
Of its inviolated floor; and here
The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore
In wanton sport those bright leaves whose decay,
Red, yellow, or ethereally pale,
Rivals the pride of summer. 'T is the haunt
Of every gentle wind whose breath can teach
The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,
One human step alone, has ever broken
The stillness of its solitude; one voice
Alone inspired its echoes; — even that voice
Which hither came, floating among the winds,
And led the loveliest among human forms
To make their wild haunts the depository
Of all the grace and beauty that endued
Its motions, render up its majesty,
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,
Commit the colors of that varying cheek,
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank
Wan moonlight even to fulness; not a sta
Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
Slept, clasped in his embrace. — O storm of death,
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night!
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,
Art king of this frail world! from the red field
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,

A mighty voice invokes thee! Ruin calls
His brother Death! A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the world;
Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine; upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head; his limbs did rest,
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and Despair,
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear
Marred his repose; the influxes of sense
And his own being, unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling. His last sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
It rests; and still as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With Nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still;
And when two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained
Utterly black, the murky shades involved
An image silent, cold, and motionless,
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
Even as a vapor fed with golden beams
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—
No sense, no motion, no divinity—
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
Once fed with many-voicèd waves—a dream
Of youth, which night and time have quenched forever—
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

Oh, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! Oh, that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
Which but one living man has drained, who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
No proud exemption in the blighting curse
He bears, over the world wanders forever,
Lone as incarnate death! Oh, that the dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled,
Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled!
The brave, the gentle and the beautiful,

The child of grace and genius. Heartless things
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms
And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth
From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
In vesper low or joyous orison,
Lifts still its solemn voice: — but thou art fled —
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
Now thou art not! Upon those pallid lips
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes
That image sleep in death, upon that form
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
Be shed — not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
Let not high verse, mourning the memory
Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,
And all the shows o' the world, are frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
It is a woe "too deep for tears," when all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

# ADONAIS

## AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS

[Publ. 1821]

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζώοισιν ἑῷος.
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν, λάμπεις ἐσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.
PLATO.

### EXTRACT FROM SHELLEY'S LETTER TO SEVERN

"I send you the Elegy on poor Keats — and I wish it were better worth your acceptance. You will see, by the preface, that it was written before I could obtain any particular account of his last moments. . . .

"In spite of his transcendent genius, Keats never was, nor ever will be, a popular poet; and the total neglect and obscurity in which the astonishing remnants of his mind still lie, was hardly to be dissipated by a writer, who, however he may differ from Keats in more important qualities, at least resembles him in that accidental one, a want of popularity.

"I have little hope, therefore, that the poem I send you will excite any attention, nor do I feel assured that a critical notice of his writings would find a single reader. But for these considerations, it had been my intention to have collected the remnants of his compositions, and to have published them with a Life and Criticism. Has he left any poems or writings of whatsoever kind, and in whose possession are they? Perhaps you would oblige me by information on this point."

### PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.
Τοιούτοις χείλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοὐκ ἐγλυκάνθη:
Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι
Ἢ δοῦναι κατέοντι τὸ φάρμακον ἔκφυγεν ἄδαν;
MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove, at least, that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of Hyperion as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the —— of —— 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an

open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric *Paris* and *Woman* and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu and Mr. Barrett and Mr. Howard Payne and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career — may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

I

I WEEP for Adonais — he is dead!
Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow! Say: 'With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!'

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veilèd eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais — he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his a mute and uncomplaining sleep;

For he is gone where all things wise and fair
Descend. Oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania! — He died,
Who was the sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished
And fed with true-love tears instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipped before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies — the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal. — Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais! — The quick Dreams,
The passion-wingèd ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not, —
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hand clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 't was her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs, as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music; the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came — Desires and Adorations,
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Fantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp; — the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds: — a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,

For whom should she have waked the
sullen year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais; wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odor, to
sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melo-
dious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's
domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth
complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty
nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of
Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy inno-
cent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its
earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving
year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous
tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, reap-
pear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead
Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every
brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and
brere;
And the green lizard and the golden
snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their
trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and
hill and Ocean,
A quickening life from the Earth's heart
has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and
motion,
From the great morning of the world
when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream im-
mersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer
light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred
thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's
delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd
might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit
tender.
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when
splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine
death
And mock the merry worm that wakes
beneath.
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone
which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the
sheath
By sightless lightning? the intense atom
glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold
repose.

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of
what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and
mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what
life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue and fields are
green,
Evening must usher night, night urge
the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year
wake year to sorrow.

XXII

*He* will awake no more, oh, never more!
'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless
Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's
core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears
and sighs.'

And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried, 'Arise!'
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse; — sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts which, to her airy tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell;
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!' cried Urania; her distress
Roused Death; Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI

'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII

'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

XXVIII

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion; — how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled! — The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

XXX

Thus ceased she; and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI

'Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift —
A love in desolation masked; — a Power
Girt round with weakness; — it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow; — even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's — oh! that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the departed one,
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown;
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow;
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt — as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep —
He hath awakened from the dream of life —
'T is we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings. *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI

He lives, he wakes — 't is Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan

Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely; he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear,
Torturing the unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear,
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, — his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved;
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on earth are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry;
'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference; then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy; 't is nought
That ages, empires, and religions, there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend, — they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought

Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome, — at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. — Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled! — Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before; from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles, — the low wind whispers near;
'T is Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

## SONNET. — OZYMANDIAS

[Publ. 1818]

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear —
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'

## LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

[Publ. 1819]

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep, wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above, the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind, the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep,
And sinks down, down — like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still,
Longing with divided will
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.
What, if there no friends will greet?
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat?
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 't will wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no.
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins, and chill,
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few gray rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;
Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughtered town
When a king in glory rides

Through the pomp of fratricides.
Those unburied bones around
There is many a mournful sound;
There is no lament for him,
Like a sunless vapor, dim,
Who once clothed with life and thought
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony.
To such a one this morn was led
My bark, by soft winds piloted.
Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the pæan
With which the legioned rooks did hail
The sun's uprise majestical;
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Through the dewy mist they soar
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
Flecked with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starred with drops of golden rain,
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Through the broken mist they sail,
And the vapors cloven and gleaming
Follow down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair.
Underneath day's azure eyes,
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City! thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne among the waves,
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace-gate
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandoned sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way,
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
Quivering through aërial gold,
As I now behold them here,
Would imagine not they were
Sepulchres, where human forms,
Like pollution-nourished worms,
To the corpse of greatness cling,
Murdered, and now mouldering.
But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold
All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chained like thee, ingloriously,
Thou and all thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime.
If not, perish thou and they! —
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away —
Earth can spare ye; while like flowers,
In the waste of years and hours,

From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.

Perish! let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tattered pall of time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;—
That a tempest-cleaving Swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
Chastening terror. What though yet
Poesy's unfailing River,
Which through Albion winds forever
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled?
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own? oh, rather say
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sun-like soul?
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp, by which the heart,
Sees things unearthly;—so thou art,
Mighty spirit! so shall be
The City that did refuge thee!

Lo, the sun floats up the sky,
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height.
From the sea a mist has spread,
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago.
By the skirts of that gray cloud
Many-domèd Padua proud
Stands, a peopled solitude,
Mid the harvest-shining plain,
Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow
With the purple vintage strain,
Heaped upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest-home.
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,
Or worse; but 't is a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.
Padua, thou within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Played at dice for Ezzelin,
Till Death cried, 'I win, I win!'
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,
Over all between the Po
And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian.
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, ay, long before,
Both have ruled from shore to shore—
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray.
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth;
Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells,
One light flame among the brakes,

While the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born; —
The spark beneath his feet is dead,
He starts to see the flames it fed
Howling through the darkened sky
With myriad tongues victoriously,
And sinks down in fear; — so thou,
O Tyranny! beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest.
Grovel on the earth! ay, hide
In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now.
'T is the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist,
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvèd star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound
Fills the overflowing sky.
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath; the leaves unsodden
Where the infant frost has trodden
With his morning-wingèd feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;
And my spirit, which so long
Darkened this swift stream of song, —
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky:
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odor, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs;
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like wingèd winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
Mid remembered agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being)
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of life and agony;
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folding wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine.
We may live so happy there,
That the spirits of the air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing paradise
The polluting multitude;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies,
And the love which heals all strife,
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood.
They, not it, would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

## STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright;
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might;
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown;
I sit upon the sands alone —
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned —
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround —
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure; —
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony

V

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament — for I am one
Whom men love not, — and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

## ODE TO THE WEST WIND

[Publ. 1820]

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet the sense faints picturing them! thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

## THE INDIAN SERENADE

[Publ. 1822]

I

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright;
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me — who knows how?
To thy chamber window, sweet!

II

The wandering airs, they faint
On the dark, the silent stream;
The champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
Oh, belovèd as thou art!

III

Oh, lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast,
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

## LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

[Publ. 1819]

I

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle:
Why not I with thine?

II

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

## THE CLOUD

[Publ. 1820]

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 't is my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,

May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, —
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch, through which I march,
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

## TO A SKYLARK

[Publ. 1820]

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, — but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see — we feel that it is there;

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As when Night is bare
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,

Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, — which overflows her bower:

Like a glowworm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy wingèd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields or waves or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be;
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee;
Thou lovest — but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream —
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound.
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then — as I am listening now.

## ODE TO LIBERTY

[Publ. 1820]

Yet Freedom, yet, thy banner torn but flying
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.
BYRON.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the Nations; Liberty,
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
And in the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the Heaven of fame

The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

II

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth;
The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air;
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not; but power from worst producing worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms.
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne; palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
Were as to mountain wolves their ragged caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favoring heaven; from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean main

V

Athens arose; a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded, —
A divine work! Athens, diviner yet,
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and forever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past;
Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast.
A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One sun illumines heaven; one spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmean Mænad,
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweaned:
And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-winged lightness,
The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
Slaves of one tyrant. Palatinus sighed
Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow;
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep,
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
With divine wand traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

X

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sun-like shafts pierce tempest-winged Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever

In the calm regions of the orient day! Luther caught thy wakening glance;
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow forever; not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

XI

The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
When, like heaven's sun girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII

Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then,
In ominous eclipse? a thousand years,
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
How like Bacchanals of blood
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
Rose; armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

XIII

England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder;
O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus;
They cry, Be dim, ye lamps of heaven suspended o'er us!
Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us
In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.

XIV

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.
Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!

Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
Where desolation clothed with loveliness
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV

Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name
Of King into the dust! or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
Ye the oracle have heard,
Lift the victory-flashing sword,
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI

Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of Priest might shrink and dwindle
Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
Each before the judgment-throne
Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown!
Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture
Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue
And frowns and smiles and splendors not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.

XVII

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave
Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavor!
If on his own high will, a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?
Oh, what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her
And cries: 'Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth?' if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one.

XVIII

Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge with solemn truth life's ill-apportioned lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
O Liberty! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee—
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought

By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears? — The solemn harmony

XIX

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
Then as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aërial golden light
On the heavy sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve unburdened of their rain;
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day, —
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

## TO ——

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burden thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

## THE QUESTION

[Publ. 1822]

I

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
And gentle odors led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

II

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets —
(Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth)
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

III

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-colored May,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day,
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

IV

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with white;
And starry river buds among the sedge;
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;

And bulrushes and reeds, of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

V

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand, — and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it! — Oh, to whom?

## TO NIGHT

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear, —
Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out;
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand —
Come, long-sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me? — and I replied,
No, not thee!

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon;
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night, —
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

## TO ———

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

## TO ———

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it;
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

II

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not, —
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

## A LAMENT

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

O WORLD! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more — oh, never more!

II

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more — oh, never more!

## LINES

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered,
The light in the dust lies dead;
When the cloud is scattered,
The rainbow's glory is shed;
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute: —
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee,
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

## A DIRGE

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main, —
Wail, for the world's wrong.

# JOHN KEATS

## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

[Written 1815]

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## SONNET

[Publ. 1817]

To one who has been long in city pent,
'T is very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven, — to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with hearts content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel, — an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

## SONNET

[Written 1817]

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high pilèd books, in charactry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love; — then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

## LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

[Publ. 1820]

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,

Underneath a new-old sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

# ENDYMION

## A ROMANCE

### By John Keats

[Publ. 1818]

'The stretched metre of an antique song.'
*Shakspeare's Sonnets.*

INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY FEELING OF PRIDE AND
REGRET AND WITH 'A BOWED MIND'
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE MOST ENGLISH OF POETS EXCEPT
SHAKSPEARE,
THOMAS CHATTERTON

## PREFACE

In a great nation, the work of an individual is of so little importance; his pleadings and excuses are so uninteresting; his 'way of life' such a nothing, that a Preface seems a sort of impertinent bow to strangers who care nothing about it.

A Preface, however, should be down in so many words; and such a one that by an eye-glance over the type the Reader may catch an idea of an Author's modesty, and non-opinion of himself — which I sincerely hope may be seen in the few lines I have to write, notwithstanding many proverbs of many ages old which men find a great pleasure in receiving as gospel.

About a twelvemonth since, I published a little book of verses; it was read by some dozen of my friends who lik'd it; and some dozen whom I was unacquainted with, who did not.

Now, when a dozen human beings are at words with another dozen, it becomes a matter of anxiety to side with one's friends — more especially when excited thereto by a great love of Poetry. I fought under disadvantages. Before I began I had no inward feel of being able to finish; and as I proceeded my steps were all uncertain. So this Poem must rather be considered as an endeavour than as a thing accomplished; a poor prologue to what, if I live, I humbly hope to do. In duty to the Public I should have kept it back for a year or two, knowing it to be so faulty; but I really cannot do so, — by repetition my favourite passages sound vapid in my ears, and I would rather redeem myself with a new Poem should this one be found of any interest.

I have to apologize to the lovers of simplicity for touching the spell of loneliness that hung about Endymion; if any of my lines plead for me with such people I shall be proud.

It has been too much the fashion of late to consider men bigoted and addicted to every word that may chance to escape their lips; now I here declare that I have not any particular affection for any particular phrase, word, or letter in the whole affair. I have written to please myself, and in hopes to please others, and for a love of fame; if I neither please myself, nor others, nor get fame, of what consequence is Phraseology.

I would fain escape the bickerings that all works not exactly in chime bring upon their begetters — but this is not fair to expect, there must be conversation of some sort and to object shows a man's consequence. In case of a London drizzle or a Scotch mist, the following quotation from Marston may perhaps 'stead me as an umbrella for an hour or so: 'let it be the curtesy of my peruser rather to pity my self-hindering labours than to malice me.'

One word more — for we cannot help seeing our own affairs in every point of view — should any one call my dedication to Chatterton affected I answer as followeth: 'Were I dead, sir, I should like a book dedicated to me.'

Teignmouth.
*March 19th*, 1818.

This Preface was shown either before or after it was in type to Reynolds and other friends, and Reynolds objected to it in terms which may be inferred from the following letter which Keats wrote him April 9, 1818, and which is so striking a reflection of his mind, when contemplating his finished work, that it should be read in connection with the poem: —

'Since you all agree that the thing is bad, it must be so — though I am not aware there is anything like Hunt in it (and if there is, it is my natural way, and I have something in common with Hunt). Look it over again, and examine into the motives, the seeds, from which any one sentence sprung — I have not the slightest feel of humility toward the public — or to anything in existence, — but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of Great Men. When I am writing for myself for the mere sake of the moment's enjoyment, perhaps nature has its course with me — but a Preface is written to the Public; a thing I cannot help looking upon as an Enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of Hostility. If I write a Preface in a supple or subdued style, it will not be in character with me as a public speaker — I would be subdued before my friends, and thank them for subduing me — but among Multitudes of Men — I have no feel of stooping; I hate the idea of humility to them.

'I never wrote one single line of Poetry with the least Shadow of public thought.

'Forgive me for vexing you and making a Trojan horse of such a Trifle, both with respect to the matter in question, and myself — but it eases me to tell you — I could not live without the love of my friends — I would jump down Ætna for any great Public good — but I hate a mawkish Popularity. I cannot be subdued before them; my Glory would be to daunt and dazzle the thousand jabberers about pictures and books. I see swarms of Porcupines with their quills erect "like lime-twigs set to catch my wingèd book," and I would fright them away with a torch. You will say my Preface is not much of a Torch. It would have been too insulting "to begin from Jove," and I could not set a golden head upon a thing of clay. If there is any fault in the Preface it is not affectation, but an undersong of disrespect to the Public. If I write another Preface, it must be without a thought of those people — I will think about it. If it should not reach you in four or five days, tell Taylor to publish it without a Preface, and let the Dedication simply stand "Inscribed to the Memory of Thomas Chatterton."' The next day he wrote to his friend, inclosing a new draft: 'I am anxious you should find this Preface tolerable. If there is an affectation in it 't is natural to me. Do let the Printer's Devil cook it, and let me be as "the casing air." You are too good in this matter — were I in your state, I am certain I should have no thought but of discontent and illness — I might though be taught Patience: I had an idea of giving no Preface; however, don't you think this had better go? O, let it — one should not be too timid — of committing faults.'

The Dedication stood as Keats proposed, and the new Preface, which is as follows:

## PREFACE

Knowing within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good; — it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms, of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more, before I bid farewell.

Teignmouth,
*April* 10, 1818.

## BOOK I

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet
breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd
ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the
moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady
boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear
rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose
blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite

Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They alway must be with us, or we die.

Therefore 't is with full happiness that I
Will trace the story of Endymion.
The very music of the name has gone
Into my being, and each pleasant scene
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own valleys: so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din;
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue
About old forests; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I 'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare, and hoary,
See it half-finish'd: but let Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.
And now at once, adventuresome, I send
My herald thought into a wilderness:
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
Easily onward, through flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
Into o'erhanging boughs, and precious fruits.
And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep
A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,
Never again saw he the happy pens
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
Over the hills at every nightfall went.
Among the shepherds, 't was believed ever,
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
From the white flock, but pass'd unworried
By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,
Until it came to some unfooted plains
Where fed the herds of Pan: aye great his gains
Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,
And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
Stems thronging all around between the swell
Of turf and slanting branches: who could tell
The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Edged round with dark tree-tops? through which a dove
Would often beat its wings, and often too
A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
There stood a marble altar, with a tress
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
For 't was the morn: Apollo's upward fire
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
A melancholy spirit well might win
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun;
The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;
Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass
Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed tenfold,
To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped

A troop of little children garlanded;
Who gathering round the altar seem'd to pry
Earnestly round as wishing to espy
Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited
For many moments, ere their ears were sated
With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then
Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.
Within a little space again it gave
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking
Through copse-clad valleys, — ere their death, o'ertaking
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmer'd light
Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
Plainer and plainer showing, till at last
Into the widest alley they all past,
Making directly for the woodland altar.
O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue faulter
In telling of this goodly company,
Of their old piety, and of their glee:
But let a portion of ethereal dew
Fall on my head, and presently unmew
My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,
Bearing the burden of a shepherd song;
Each having a white wicker, overbrimm'd
With April's tender younglings: next, well trimm'd,
A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks
As may be read of in Arcadian books;
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
Let his divinity o'erflowing die
In music, through the vales of Thessaly:
Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the ground,
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,
Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
A venerable priest full soberly,
Begirt with minist'ring looks: alway his eye
Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
And after him his sacred vestments swept.
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light;
And in his left he held a basket full
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull:
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.
His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,
Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,
Up-follow'd by a multitude that rear'd
Their voices to the clouds, a fair-wrought car,
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown:
Who stood therein did seem of great renown
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;
And, for those simple times, his garments were
A chieftain king's; beneath his breast, half bare,
Was hung a silver bugle, and between
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
A smile was on his countenance; he seem'd
To common lookers-on, like one who dream'd
Of idleness in groves Elysian:
But there were some who feelingly could scan
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
Through his forgotten hands: then would they sigh,
And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
Of logs piled solemnly. — Ah, well-a-day,
Why should our young Endymion pine away!

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,
Stood silent round the shrine: each look was changed
To sudden veneration: women meek

Beckon'd their sons to silence; while each cheek
Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.
Endymion too, without a forest peer,
Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,
Among his brothers of the mountain chase.
In midst of all, the venerable priest
Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,
And, after lifting up his aged hands,
Thus spake he: 'Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!
Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:
Whether descended from beneath the rocks
That overtop your mountains; whether come
From valleys where the pipe is never dumb;
Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly furze
Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge
Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,
Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn
By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:

Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare
The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air;
And all ye gentle girls who foster up
Udderless lambs, and in a little cup
Will put choice honey for a favour'd youth:
Yea, every one attend! for in good truth
Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains
Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains
Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd
His early song against yon breezy sky,
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity.'

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire
Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;
Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.
Now while the earth was drinking it, and while
Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,
And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright
'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light
Spread grayly eastward, thus a chorus sang:

'O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and harken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds —
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx — do thou now,
By thy love's milky brow!
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan!

'O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom
Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow-girted bees
Their golden honeycombs; our village leas
Their fairest blossom'd beans and poppied corn;
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
To sing for thee; low-creeping strawberries
Their summer coolness; pent-up butterflies

Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh-budding year
All its completions — be quickly near,
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
O forester divine !

'Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
For willing service ; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit ;
Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw ;
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewilder'd shepherds to their path again ;
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,
And gather up all fancifullest shells
For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping;
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the crown
With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones brown —
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king!

'O Hearkener to the loud-clapping shears,
While ever and anon to his shorn peers,
A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
Anger our huntsman: Breather round our farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors:
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge — see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows!

'Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth:
Gives it a touch ethereal — a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity;
A firmament reflected in a sea;
An element filling the space between;
An unknown — but no more: we humbly screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean!'

Even while they brought their burden to a close,
A shout from the whole multitude arose,
That linger'd in the air like dying rolls
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian sholes
Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.
Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,
Young companies nimbly began dancing
To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.
Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly
To tunes forgotten — out of memory:
Fair creatures! whose young children's children bred
Thermopylæ its heroes — not yet dead,
But in old marbles ever beautiful.
High genitors, unconscious did they cull
Time's sweet first-fruits — they danced to weariness,
And then in quiet circles did they press
The hillock turf, and caught the latter end
Of some strange history, potent to send
A young mind from its bodily tenement.
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent
On either side; pitying the sad death
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
Of Zephyr slew him, — Zephyr penitent,
Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament,
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.
The archers too, upon a wider plain,
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top,
Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee

And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,
Poor, lonely Niobe! when her lovely young
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,
And very, very deadliness did nip
Her motherly cheeks. Aroused from this sad mood
By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,
Uplifting his strong bow into the air,
Many might after brighter visions stare:
After the Argonauts, in blind amaze
Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,
Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,
There shot a golden splendour far and wide,
Spangling those million poutings of the brine
With quivering ore: 't was even an awful shine
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,
Might turn their steps towards the sober ring
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increased
The silvery setting of their mortal star.
There they discoursed upon the fragile bar
That keeps us from our homes ethereal;
And what our duties there to nightly call
Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather;
To summon all the downiest clouds together
For the sun's purple couch; to emulate
In minist'ring the potent rule of fate
With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations;
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons
Sweet poesy by moonlight: besides these,
A world of other unguess'd offices.
Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,
Into Elysium; vying to rehearse
Each one his own anticipated bliss.
One felt heart-certain that he could not miss
His quick-gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
Her lips with music for the welcoming.
Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal spring,
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales:
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind;
And, ever after, through those regions be
His messenger, his little Mercury.
Some were athirst in soul to see again
Their fellow-huntsmen o'er the wide champaign
In times long past; to sit with them, and talk
Of all the chances in their earthly walk;
Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores
Of happiness, to when upon the moors,
Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,
And shared their famish'd scrips. Thus all out-told
Their fond imaginations, — saving him
Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,
Endymion: yet hourly had he striven
To hide the cankering venom, that had riven
His fainting recollections. Now indeed
His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed
The sudden silence, or the whispers low,
Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,
Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,
Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms:
But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,
Like one who on the earth had never stept.
Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man,
Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?
Peona, his sweet sister: of all those,
His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,
And breathed a sister's sorrow to persuade
A yielding up, a cradling on her care.
Her eloquence did breathe away the curse:
She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse
Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,
Along a path between two little streams, —
Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,
From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow

From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small;
Until they came to where these streamlets fall,
With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush,
Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush
With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.
A little shallop, floating there hard by,
Pointed its beak over the fringed bank;
And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,
And dipt again, with the young couple's weight,—
Peona guiding, through the water straight,
Towards a bowery island opposite;
Which gaining presently, she steered light
Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove,
Where nested was an arbour, overwove
By many a summer's silent fingering;
To whose cool bosom she was used to bring
Her playmates, with their needle broidery,
And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,
Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,
And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.
Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest:
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
Peona's busy hand against his lips,
And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips
In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
A patient watch over the stream that creeps
Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
Held her in peace: so that a whispering blade
Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling
Down in the bluebells, or a wren light rustling
Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfined
Restraint! imprison'd liberty! great key
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves
And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world
Of silvery enchantment!—who, upfurl'd
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
But renovates and lives?—Thus, in the bower,
Endymion was calm'd to life again.
Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,
He said: 'I feel this thine endearing love
All through my bosom: thou art as a dove
Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings
About me; and the pearliest dew not brings
Such morning incense from the fields of May,
As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray
From those kind eyes,—the very home and haunt
Of sisterly affection. Can I want
Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears?
Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears
That, any longer, I will pass my days
Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise
My voice upon the mountain-heights; once more
Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar:
Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll
Around the breathed boar: again I 'll poll
The fair-grown yew-tree, for a chosen bow:
And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,
Again I 'll linger in a sloping mead
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed
Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet!
And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat
My soul to keep in its resolved course.'

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad exclaim,
And took a lute, from which there pulsing came
A lively prelude, fashioning the way
In which her voice should wander. 'T was a lay
More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;
And nothing since has floated in the air
So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare
Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand;

For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
The quick invisible strings, even though she saw
Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
Before the deep intoxication.
But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
Her self-possession — swung the lute aside,
And earnestly said: 'Brother, 't is vain to hide
That thou dost know of things mysterious,
Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught
Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught
A Paphian dove upon a message sent?
Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,
Sacred to Dian? Haply, thou hast seen
Her naked limbs among the alders green;
And that, alas! is death. No, I can trace
Something more high perplexing in thy face!'

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,
And said, 'Art thou so pale, who wast so bland
And merry in our meadows? How is this?
Tell me thine ailment: tell me all amiss! —
Ah! thou hast been unhappy at the change
Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange?
Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?
Ambition is no sluggard: 't is no prize,
That toiling years would put within my grasp,
That I have sigh'd for: with so deadly gasp
No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
So all have set my heavier grief above
These things which happen. Rightly have they done:
I, who still saw the horizontal sun
Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world,
Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
My spear aloft, as signal for the chase —
I, who, for very sport of heart, would race
With my own steed from Araby; pluck down
A vulture from his towery perching; frown
A lion into growling, loth retire —
To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,
And sink thus low! but I will ease my breast
Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest

'This river does not see the naked sky,
Till it begins to progress silverly
Around the western border of the wood,
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood
Seems at the distance like a crescent moon:
And in that nook, the very pride of June
Had I been used to pass my weary eves;
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
And I could witness his most kingly hour,
When he doth tighten up the golden reins,
And paces leisurely down amber plains
His snorting four. Now when his chariot last
Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red:
At which I wondered greatly, knowing well
That but one night had wrought this flowery spell;
And, sitting down close by, began to muse
What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,
In passing here, his owlet pinions shook;
Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook
Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
Had dipt his rod in it: such garland wealth
Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole
A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;
And shaping visions all about my sight
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,
And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous swim:
And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
The enchantment that afterwards befell?
Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream
That never tongue, although it overteem
With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,
Could figure out and to conception bring
All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
Watching the zenith, where the milky way
Among the stars in virgin splendour pours;
And travelling my eye, until the doors
Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
I became loth and fearful to alight
From such high soaring by a downward glance:

So kept me steadfast in that airy trance,
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
When, presently, the stars began to glide,
And faint away, before my eager view:
At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge;
And lo! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
A shell for Neptune's goblet; she did soar
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
Commingling with her argent spheres did roll
Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
At last into a dark and vapoury tent —
Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
Of planets all were in the blue again.
To commune with those orbs, once more I raised
My sight right upward: but it was quite dazed
By a bright something, sailing down apace,
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:
Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
Who from Olympus watch our destinies!
Whence that completed form of all completeness?
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?
Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun;
Not — thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun
Such follying before thee — yet she had,
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;
And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orbed brow;
The which were blended in, I know not how,
With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings
And plays about its fancy, till the stings
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
Unto what awful power shall I call?
To what high fane? — Ah! see her hovering feet,
More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
From out her cradle shell. The wind outblows
Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;
'T is blue, and over-spangled with a million
Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed,
Handfuls of daisies.' — 'Endymion, how strange!
Dream within dream!' — 'She took an airy range,
And then, towards me, like a very maid,
Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,
And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 't was too much;
Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
Yet held my recollection, even as one
Who dives three fathoms where the waters run
Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon,
I felt upmounted in that region
Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
And eagles struggle with the buffeting north
That balances the heavy meteor-stone; —
Felt, too, I was not fearful, nor alone,
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.
Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,
And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd;
Such as ay muster where gray time has scoop'd
Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side:
There hollow sounds aroused me, and I sigh'd
To faint once more by looking on my bliss —
I was distracted; madly did I kiss
The wooing arms which held me, and did give
My eyes at once to death: but 't was to live,
To take in drafts of life from the gold fount
Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count
The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd

A second self, that each might be redeem'd
And plunder'd of its load of blessedness.
Ah, desperate mortal! I ev'n dared to press
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
And, at that moment, felt my body dip
Into a warmer air: a moment more,
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store
Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,
Made delicate from all white-flower bells;
And once, above the edges of our nest,
An arch face peep'd, — an Oread as I guess'd.

'Why did I dream that sleep o'erpower'd me
In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,
Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
And stare them from me? But no, like a spark
That needs must die, although its little beam
Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
Fell into nothing — into stupid sleep.
And so it was, until a gentle creep,
A careful moving caught my waking ears,
And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
My clenched hands; — for lo! the poppies hung
Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease
With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus! —
Away I wander'd — all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
Were full of pestilent light; out taintless rills
Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd gills
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
In little journeys, I beheld in it
A disguised demon, missioned to knit
My soul with under darkness; to entice
My stumblings down some monstrous precipice:
Therefore I eager follow'd, and did curse
The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse,
Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven!
These things, with all their comfortings, are given
To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
Of weary life.'

Thus ended he, and both
Sat silent: for the maid was very loth
To answer; feeling well that breathed words
Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords
Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps
Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps,
And wonders; struggles to devise some blame;
To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
*On this poor weakness!* but, for all her strife,
She could as soon have crush'd away the life
From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,
She said with trembling chance: 'Is this the cause?
This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas!
That one who through this middle earth should pass
Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave
His name upon the harp-string, should achieve
No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
Singing alone, and fearfully, — how the blood
Left his young cheek; and how he used to stray
He knew not where; and how he would say, *nay*,
If any said 't was love: and yet 't was love;
What could it be but love? How a ring-dove
Let fall a sprig of yew-tree in his path;

And how he died: and then, that love doth scathe
The gentle hearth as northern blasts do roses;
And then the ballad of his sad life closes
With sighs and an alas! — Endymion!
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth, — anon
Among the winds at large — that all may hearken!
Although, before the crystal heavens darken,
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,
Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands
With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
And towers of amethyst, — would I so tease
My pleasant days, because I could not mount
Into those regions? The Morphean fount
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
Into its airy channels with so subtle,
So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
Circled a million times within the space
Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,
A tinting of its quality: how light
Must dreams themselves be; seeing they're more slight
Than the mere nothing that engenders them!
Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick?
Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick
For nothing but a dream?' Hereat the youth
Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth
Was in his plaited brow: yet his eyelids
Widen'd a little, as when Zephyr bids
A little breeze to creep between the fans
Of careless butterflies: amid his pains
He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,
Full palatable; and a colour grew
Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

'Peona! ever have I long'd to slake
My thirst for the world's praises: nothing base,
No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace
The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepared —
Though now 't is tatter'd; leaving my bark bared
And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope
Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.
Wherein lies happiness? In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,
Full alchemized, and free of space. Behold
The clear religion of heaven! Fold
A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,
And soothe thy lips: hist, when the airy stress
Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds
Æolian magic from their lucid wombs:
Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs;
Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;
Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave
Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot;
Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
Where long ago a giant battle was;
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass
In every place where infant Orpheus slept.
Feel we these things? — that moment have we stept
Into a sort of oneness, and our state
Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
Richer entanglements, enthralments far
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity: the crown of these
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
Upon the forehead of humanity.
All its more ponderous and bulky worth
Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth
A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,
There hangs by unseen film, an orbed drop
Of light, and that is love: its influence
Thrown in our eyes genders a novel sense,
At which we start and fret: till in the end,
Melting into its radiance, we blend,
Mingle, and so become a part of it, —
Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
So wingedly: when we combine therewith,

Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,
That men, who might have tower'd in the van
Of all the congregated world, to fan
And winnow from the coming step of time
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
Have been content to let occasion die,
Whilst they did sleep in love's Elysium.
And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
Than speak against this ardent listlessness:
For I have ever thought that it might bless
The world with benefits unknowingly;
As does the nightingale, up-perched high,
And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves —
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-gray hood.
Just so may love, although 't is understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witnesseth:
What I know not: but who, of men, can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
If human souls did never kiss and greet?

'Now, if this earthly love has power to make
Men's being mortal, immortal; to shake
Ambition from their memories, and brim
Their measure of content; what merest whim,
Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
To one, who keeps within his steadfast aim
A love immortal, an immortal too.
Look not so wilder'd; for these things are true
And never can be born of atomies
That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I 'm sure,
My restless spirit never could endure
To brood so long upon one luxury,
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
My sayings will the less obscured seem
When I have told thee how my waking sight
Has made me scruple whether that same night
Was pass'd in dreaming. Hearken, sweet Peona!
Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,
Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,
And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,
And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
Past them, but he must brush on every side.
Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,
Far as the slabbed margin of a well,
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.
Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set
Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet
Edges them round, and they have golden pits:
'T was there I got them, from the gaps and slits
In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,
When all above was faint with mid-day heat.
And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,
I 'd bubble up the water through a reed;
So reaching back to boyhood: make me ships
Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,
With leaves stuck in them; and the Neptune be
Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
When lovelorn hours had left me less a child,
I sat contemplating the figures wild
Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.

Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;
So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver
The happy chance: so happy, I was fain
To follow it upon the open plain,
And, therefore, was just going; when, behold!
A wonder, fair as any I have told —
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap
Through the cool depth. — It moved as if to flee —
I started up, when lo! refreshfully,
There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,
Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,
Wrapping all objects from my smother'd sight,
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.
Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain
Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
On the deer's tender haunches: late, and loth,
'T is scared away by slow returning pleasure.
How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure
Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,
By a foreknowledge of unslumbrous night!
Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,
Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill:
And a whole age of lingering moments crept
Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept
Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.
Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen;
Once more been tortured with renewed life.
When last the wintry gusts gave over strife
With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies
Warm and serene, but yet with moisten'd eyes
In pity of the shatter'd infant buds, —
That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,
My hunting cap, because I laugh'd and smiled,
Chatted with thee, and many days exiled
All torment from my breast; — 't was even then,
Straying about, yet coop'd up in the den
Of helpless discontent, — hurling my lance
From place to place, and following at chance,
At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,
And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck
In the middle of a brook, — whose silver ramble
Down twenty little falls through reeds and bramble,
Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,
Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave
The nether sides of mossy stones and rock, —
'Mong which it gurgled blithe adieus, to mock
Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,
Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread
Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.
"Ah! impious mortal, whither do I roam!"
Said I, low-voiced: "Ah, whither! 'T is the grot
Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,
Doth her resign; and where her tender hands
She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands:
Or 't is the cell of Echo, where she sits,
And babbles thorough silence, till her wits
Are gone in tender madness, and anon,
Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone
Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,
And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,
To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,
Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,
And weave them dyingly — send honey-whispers
Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers
May sigh my love unto her pitying!
O charitable Echo! hear, and sing
This ditty to her! — tell her" — So I stay'd
My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid,
Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,
And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.

Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name
Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came:
"Endymion! the cave is secreter
Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir
No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise
Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys
And trembles through my labyrinthine hair."
At that oppress'd, I hurried in. — Ah! where
Are those swift moments? Whither are they fled?
I 'll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed
Sorrow, the way to death; but patiently
Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;
And come instead demurest meditation,
To occupy me wholly, and to fashion
My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.
No more will I count over, link by link,
My chain of grief: no longer strive to find
A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind
Blustering about my ears: aye, thou shalt see,
Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;
What a calm round of hours shall make my days.
There is a paly flame of hope that plays
Where'er I look: but yet, I 'll say 't is naught —
And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
Already, a more healthy countenance?
By this the sun is setting; we may chance
Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car.'
This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star
Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand:
They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

## FANCY

[Publ. 1820]

Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She 'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overawed,
Fancy, high-commission'd: — send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it: — thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment — hark!
'T is the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see

Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Every thing is spoilt by use;
Where 's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where 's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where 's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where 's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where 's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waste and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid. — Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she 'll bring. —
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

## ODE

[Publ. 1820]

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wond'rous
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

[Publ. 1820]

I

St. Agnes' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censor old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,

And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no — already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,

Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, 'Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

XII

Get hence! get hence! there 's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there 's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away.' — 'Ah, Gossip dear,
We 're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
And tell me how' — 'Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.'

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she mutter'd 'Well-a — well-a-day!'
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
'Now tell me where is Madeline,' said he,
'O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously.'

XIV

'St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I 've mickle time to grieve.'

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,

Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney-nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
'A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.'

XVII

'I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,'
Quoth Porphyro: 'O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears.'

XVIII

'Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd.' Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the Dame:
'All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.'

XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midsts, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven: — Porphyro grew faint;
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warm jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,

Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!
— how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet: —
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone: —
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light. —
'And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.'

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains: — 't was a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd 'La belle dame sans mercy:'
Close to her ear touching the melody; —
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

'Ah, Porphyro!' said she, 'but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,

Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.'

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII

'T is dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
'This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!'
'T is dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
'No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing.'

XXXVIII

'My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

'Hark! 't is an elfin storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand:—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

## ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

[Publ. 1820]

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? what maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou has not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

## LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

[Publ. 1820]

I

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful — a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

VI

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said —
'I love thee true.'

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed, and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
So kiss'd to sleep.

IX

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd — Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried — 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

XI

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

## ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

[Publ. 1819]

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness, —
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;

That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: — do I wake or sleep?

## LAMIA

[Publ. 1820]

### PART I

Upon a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslipp'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft;
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons poured
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometimes she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared her secret bed:
In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:
'When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake!
When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me!'
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries —
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:
And for her eyes — what could such eyes do there
But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?
As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,
And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey:

'Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
I had a splendid dream of thee last night:

I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting clear,
Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.
I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou art!
Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid?'
Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
'Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high-inspired!
Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—
Where she doth breathe!' 'Bright planet, thou hast said,'
Return'd the snake, 'but seal with oaths, fair God!'
'I swear,' said Hermes, 'by my serpent rod,
And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown!'
Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.
Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
'Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,
Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
About these thornless wilds; her pleasant days
She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet;
From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,
She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen:
And by my power is her beauty veil'd
To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.
Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
I took compassion on her, bade her steep
Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
Her loveliness invisible, yet free
To wander as she loves, in liberty.
Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone
If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!'
Then, once again, the charmed God began
An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping said,
'I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charming as before.
I love a youth of Corinth — O the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.
Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now.'
The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen
Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.
It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem
Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd;
Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean charm.
So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stept: she, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand,
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,
Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.
The colours all inflamed throughout her train,
She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet pain:
A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede:
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her stars:
So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,

Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown; that vanish'd, also she
Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, 'Lycius! gentle Lycius!'—Borne aloft
With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
These words dissolved: Crete's forests heard no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore:
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea
Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange;
Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart
Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent.
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly
By the wayside to linger, we shall see;
But first 't is fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
Of all she list, strange or magnificent:
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went;
Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair;
Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine;
Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
And fell into a swooning love of him.
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she knew,
To Corinth from the shore; for freshly blew

The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
Grated the quay-stones with her brazen prow
In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchor'd; whither he had been awhile
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.
Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire:
For by some freakful chance he made retire
From his companions, and set forth to walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk:
Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appear'd
His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—
Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen
She stood: he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
Turn'd — syllabling thus, 'Ah, Lycius bright!
And will you leave me on the hills alone?
Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown.'
He did; not with cold wonder fearingly,
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;
For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seem'd he had loved them a whole summer long:
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full, — while he, afraid
Lest she should vanish ere his lips had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore;
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure:
'Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see
Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
For pity do not this sad heart belie —
Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.
Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
To thy far wishes will thy streams obey:
Stay! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
Alone they can drink up the morning rain:
Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?
So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade,
Thy memory will waste me to a shade: —
For pity do not melt!' — 'If I should stay,'
Said Lamia, 'here, upon this floor of clay,
And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
What canst thou say or do of charm enough
To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
Over these hills and vales, where no joy is, —
Empty of immortality and bliss!
Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
That finer spirits cannot breathe below
In human climes, and live: Alas! poor youth,
What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
My essence? What serener palaces,
Where I may all my many senses please,
And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease?
It cannot be — Adieu!' So said, she rose
Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swoon'd murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.
And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish'd days,
Use other speech than looks; bidding him raise

His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
She dwelt but half retired, and there had led
Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love; yet in content
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 't was the night before
The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no more,
But wept alone those days, for why should she adore?
Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;
And every word she spake enticed him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them all,
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged aright,
That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
Lycius to all made eloquent reply,
Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh:
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
If 't was too far that night for her soft feet.
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
To a few paces; not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised:
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,
Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown:
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
While hurried Lamia trembled: 'Ah,' said he,
'Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?'—
'I 'm wearied,' said fair Lamia: 'tell me who
Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
His features: — Lycius! wherefore did you blind
Yourself from his quick eyes?' Lycius replied,
''T is Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
And good instructor; but to-night he seems
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.'

While yet he spake they had arrived before
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water; for so new
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
Breathed from the hinges, as the ample span
Of the wide doors disclosed a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
Were seen about the markets: none knew where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house:
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befell,
'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

## PART II

Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is — Love, forgive us! — cinders, ashes, dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's fast: —
That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
Or clench'd it quite: but too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts: — there they reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
Saving a tithe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they almost slept;
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
Of trumpets — Lycius started — the sounds fled,
But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
For the first time, since first he harbour'd in
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.
'Why do you sigh, fair creature?' whisper'd he:
'Why do you think?' return'd she tenderly:
'You have deserted me; — where am I now?
Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:
No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
From your breast houseless: aye, it must be so.'
He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,
'My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
While I am striving how to fill my heart
With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,
Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?

Aye, a sweet kiss — you see your mighty woes.
My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!
What mortal hath a prize, that other men
May be confounded and abash'd withal,
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestical,
And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
While through the thronged streets your bridal car
Wheels round its dazzling spokes.' — The lady's cheek
Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
Her wild and timid nature to his aim;
Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
Fierce and sanguineous as 't was possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo's presence when in act to strike
The serpent — Ha! the serpent! certes, she
Was none. She burnt, she loved the tyranny,
And, all subdued, consented to the hour
When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
'Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,
I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
Or friends or kinsfolk on the citied earth,
To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?'
'I have no friends,' said Lamia, 'no, not one;
My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:
My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
Even as you list invite your many guests;
But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
With any pleasure on me, do not bid
Old Apollonius — from him keep me hid.'
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,
Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
With other pageants: but this fair unknown
Had not a friend. So being left alone,
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin,)
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 't is doubtful how and whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short space
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
High in the midst, in honour of the bride:
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
From either side their stems branch'd one to one
All down the aisled place; and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.

So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
Came jasper panels; then, anon, there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore flout
The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,
And show to common eyes these secret bowers?
The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy brain,
Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
And enter'd marvelling: for they knew the street,
Remember'd it from childhood all complete
Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne;
So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and keen:
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere:
'T was Apollonius: something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt: — 't was just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. 'T is no common rule,
Lycius,' said he, 'for uninvited guest
To force himself upon you, and infest
With an unbidden presence the bright throng
Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,
And you forgive me.' Lycius blush'd, and led
The old man through the inner doors broad-spread;
With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume:
Before each lucid panel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the soft
Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.
Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats inspher'd,
High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God.

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
By ministering slaves, upon his hands and feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the feast
In white robes, and themselves in order placed
Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;
But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
Of powerful instruments: — the gorgeous dyes,
The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
And every soul from human trammels freed,
No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet wine,
Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright:
Garlands of every green, and every scent
From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought
Of every guest: that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease.

What wreath for Lamia? What for Lycius?
What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung
The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him
The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face,
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher
Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir,
Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.
Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
As pale it lay upon the rosy couch:
'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins;
Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
'Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost thou start?
Know'st thou that man?' Poor Lamia answer'd not.
He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gazed: his human senses reel:
Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs:
There was no recognition in those orbs.
'Lamia!' he cried — and no soft-toned reply.
The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush: the stately music no more breathes;
The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;
A deadly silence step by step increased,
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
'Lamia!' he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek

With its sad echo did the silence break.
'Begone, foul dream!' he cried, gazing again
In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom
Misted the cheek; no passion to illume
The deep-recessed vision: — all was blight;
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
'Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!
Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban
Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
Here represent their shadowy presences,
May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,
In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
Of conscience, for their long-offended might,
For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,
Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard wretch!
Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
My sweet bride withers at their potency.'
'Fool!' said the sophist, in an under-tone
Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
'Fool! Fool!' repeated he, while his eyes still
Relented not, nor moved; 'from every ill
Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?'
Then Lamia breathed death breath; the sophist's eye,
Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
He look'd and look'd again a level — No!
'A serpent!' echoed he; no sooner said,
Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
On the high couch he lay! — his friends came round —
Supported him — no pulse or breath they found,
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.

## TO AUTUMN

[Publ. 1820]

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

## THE LAST SONNET

[Written 1820]

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:
No — yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

# MATTHEW ARNOLD

## REQUIESCAT

[Publ. 1849]

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew:
In quiet she reposes;
Ah! would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound;
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath;
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

## RESIGNATION

### TO FAUSTA

[Publ. 1849]

*To die be given us, or attained!*
*Fierce work it were, to do again.*

So pilgrims, bound for Mecca, prayed
At burning noon; so warriors said,
Scarfed with the cross, who watched the miles
Of dust which wreathed their struggling files
Down Lydian mountains; so, when snows
Round Alpine summits, eddying rose,
The Goth, bound Rome-wards; so the Hun,
Crouched on his saddle, while the sun
Went lurid down o'er flooded plains
Through which the groaning Danube strains
To the drear Euxine: so pray all,
Whom labors, self-ordained, inthrall;
Because they to themselves propose
On this side the all-common close
A goal which, gained, may give repose.
So pray they; and to stand again
Where they stood once, to them were pain;
Pain to thread back and to renew
Past straits, and currents long steered through.

But milder natures, and more free, —
Whom an unblamed serenity
Hath freed from passions, and the state
Of struggle these necessitate;
Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
Hath made, or birth hath found, resigned, —
These mourn not, that their goings pay
Obedience to the passing day.
These claim not every laughing hour
For handmaid to their striding power;
Each in her turn, with torch upreared,
To await their march; and when appeared,
Through the cold gloom, with measured race,
To usher for a destined space
(Her own sweet errands all foregone)
The too imperious traveller on.
These, Fausta, ask not this; nor thou,
Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now!

We left just ten years since, you say,
That wayside inn we left to-day.
Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
Shouts greeting from his easy-chair.
High on a bank our leader stands,
Reviews and ranks his motley bands,
Makes clear our goal to every eye, —
The valley's western boundary.
A gate swings to! our tide hath flowed
Already from the silent road.
The valley-pastures, one by one,
Are threaded, quiet in the sun;
And now, beyond the rude stone bridge,
Slopes gracious up the western ridge.
Its woody border, and the last
Of its dark upland farms, is past;
Cool farms, with open-lying stores,

Under their burnished sycamores, —
All past! and through the trees we glide
Emerging on the green hillside.
There climbing hangs, a far-seen sign,
Our wavering, many-colored line;
There winds, up-streaming slowly still
Over the summit of the hill.
And now, in front, behold outspread
Those upper regions we must tread, —
Mild hollows, and clear heathy swells,
The cheerful silence of the fells.
Some two hours' march, with serious air,
Through the deep noontide heats we fare;
The red-grouse, springing at our sound,
Skims, now and then, the shining ground;
No life, save his and ours, intrudes
Upon these breathless solitudes.
Oh, joy! again the farms appear.
Cool shade is there, and rustic cheer;
There springs the brook will guide us down,
Bright comrade, to the noisy town.
Lingering, we follow down; we gain
The town, the highway, and the plain.
And many a mile of dusty way,
Parched and road-worn, we made that day;
But, Fausta, I remember well,
That as the balmy darkness fell,
We bathed our hands with speechless glee,
That night, in the wide-glimmering sea.

Once more we tread this self-same road,
Fausta, which ten years since we trod;
Alone we tread it, you and I,
Ghosts of that boisterous company.
Here, where the brook shines, near its head,
In its clear, shallow, turf-fringed bed;
Here, whence the eye first sees, far down,
Capped with faint smoke, the noisy town,—
Here sit we, and again unroll,
Though slowly, the familiar whole.
The solemn wastes of heathy hill
Sleep in the July sunshine still;
The self-same shadows now, as then;
Play through this glassy upland glen;
The loose dark stones on the green way
Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay;
On this mild bank above the stream,
(You crush them!) the blue gentians gleam.
Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,
The sailing foam, the shining pool!
These are not changed; and we, you say,
Are scarce more changed, in truth, than they.

The gypsies, whom we met below,
They too have long roamed to and fro;
They ramble, leaving, where they pass,
Their fragments on the cumbered grass.
And often to some kindly place
Chance guides the migratory race,
Where, though long wanderings intervene,
They recognize a former scene.
The dingy tents are pitched; the fires
Give to the wind their wavering spires;
In dark knots crouch round the wild flame
Their children, as when first they came;
They see their shackled beasts again
Move, browsing, up the gray-walled lane.
Signs are not wanting, which might raise
The ghost in them of former days, —
Signs are not wanting, if they would;
Suggestions to disquietude.
For them, for all, time's busy touch,
While it mends little, troubles much.
Their joints grow stiffer — but the year
Runs his old round of dubious cheer;
Chilly they grow — yet winds in March,
Still, sharp as ever, freeze and parch;
They must live still — and yet, God knows,
Crowded and keen the country grows;
It seems as if, in their decay,
The law grew stronger every day.
So might they reason, so compare,
Fausta, times past with times that are;
But no! they rubbed through yesterday
In their hereditary way,
And they will rub through, if they can,
To-morrow on the self-same plan,
Till death arrive to supersede,
For them, vicissitude and need.

The poet, to whose mighty heart
Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
Subdues that energy to scan
Not his own course, but that of man.
Though he move mountains, though his day
Be passed on the proud heights of sway,
Though he hath loosed a thousand chains,
Though he hath borne immortal pains,
Action and suffering though he know, —
He hath not lived, if he lives so.
He sees, in some great-historied land,
A ruler of the people stand,
Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
Roll through the heaving multitude,
Exults — yet for no moment's space
Envies the all-regarded place.
Beautiful eyes meet his, and he
Bears to admire uncravingly;
They pass: he, mingled with the crowd,
Is in their far-off triumphs proud.

From some high station he looks down,
At sunset, on a populous town;
Surveys each happy group which fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets, —
Each with some errand of its own, —
And does not say, *I am alone.*
He sees the gentle stir of birth
When morning purifies the earth;
He leans upon a gate, and sees
The pastures, and the quiet trees.
Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,
Folds the still valley almost round;
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
Is answered from the depth of dawn;
In the hedge straggling to the stream,
Pale, dew-drenched, half-shut roses gleam.
But, where the farther side slopes down,
He sees the drowsy new-waked clown
In his white quaint-embroidered frock
Make, whistling, toward his mist-wreathed flock,
Slowly, behind his heavy tread,
The wet, flowered grass heaves up its head.
Leaned on his gate, he gazes: tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.
Before him he sees life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole, —
That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace;
That life, whose dumb wish is not missed
If birth proceeds, if things subsist;
The life of plants, and stones, and rain,
The life he craves — if not in vain
Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
His sad lucidity of soul.

You listen; but that wandering smile,
Fausta, betrays you cold the while!
Your eyes pursue the bells of foam
Washed, eddying, from this bank, their home.
*Those gypsies* — so your thoughts I scan —
*Are less, the poet more, than man.*
*They feel not, though they move and see.*
*Deeper the poet feels; but he*
*Breathes, when he will, immortal air,*
*Where Orpheus and where Homer are.*
*In the day's life, whose iron round*
*Hems us all in, he is not bound;*
*He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,*
*And flees the common life of men.*
*He escapes thence, but we abide.*
*Not deep the poet sees, but wide.*

The world in which we live and move
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love,
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy; and, were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismayed,
Beyond his passion's widest range,
Far regions of eternal change.
Nay, and since death, which wipes out man,
Finds him with many an unsolved plan,
With much unknown, and much untried,
Wonder not dead, and thirst not dried,
Still gazing on the ever full
Eternal mundane spectacle, —
This world in which we draw our breath,
In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death.

Blame thou not, therefore, him who dares
Judge vain beforehand human cares;
Whose natural insight can discern
What through experience others learn;
Who needs not love and power, to know
Love transient, power an unreal show;
Who treads at ease life's uncheered ways:
Him blame not, Fausta, rather praise!
Rather thyself for some aim pray,
Nobler than this, to fill the day;
Rather that heart, which burns in thee,
Ask, not to amuse, but to set free;
Be passionate hopes not ill resigned
For quiet, and a fearless mind.
And though fate grudge to thee and me
The poet's rapt security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from chance, have conquered fate.
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to men's business not too near,
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw homeward to the general life.
Like leaves by suns not yet uncurled;
To the wise, foolish; to the world,
Weak: yet not weak, I might reply,
Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
To whom each moment in its race,
Crowd as we will its neutral space,
Is but a quiet watershed
Whence, equally, the seas of life and death are fed.
Enough, we live! and if a life
With large results so little rife,
Though bearable, seem hardly worth
This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth;
Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread,

The solemn hills around us spread,
This stream which falls incessantly,
The strange-scrawled rocks, the lonely sky,
If I might lend their life a voice,
Seem to bear rather than rejoice.
And even could the intemperate prayer
Man iterates, while these forbear,
For movement, for an ampler sphere,
Pierce Fate's impenetrable ear;
Not milder is the general lot
Because our spirits have forgot,
In action's dizzying eddy whirled,
The something that infects the world.

## SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

### AN EPISODE

[Publ. 1853]

And the first gray of morning filled the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hushed, and still the men were plunged in sleep.
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed:
But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he passed, which stood
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere;
Through the black tents he passed, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink, — the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crowned the top
With a clay fort; but that was fallen, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dulled; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said, —
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said, —
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun has not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep: but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army marched;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone, —
Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man: if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight,

Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sighed, and said, —
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press forever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 't is truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray:
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old;
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorred approaches of old age;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian king.
There go! — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us; fain therefore send thee hence in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain. But who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropped Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He passed, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and called
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun by this had risen, and cleared the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain: so Haman bade, —
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they streamed;
As when some gray November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian seaboard, — so they streamed.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the king's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds, who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service owned, —
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere, —
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians formed, —

First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seemed,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshalled battalions bright in burnished steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And checked his ranks, and fixed them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said, —
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
As in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears.
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy, —
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of pedlers from Cabool
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parched throats with sugared mulberries;
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows, —
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the king;
These came and counselled, and then Gudurz said, —
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name;
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried, —
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."
He spake; and Peran-Wisa turned, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And crossed the camp which lay behind, and reached,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitched; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camped around.
And Gudurz entered Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food, —
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark-green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And played with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he looked, and saw him stand,
And with a cry sprang up, and dropped the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said, —

"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said, —
"Not now. A time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;
For, from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion — and thou know'st his name:
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"
He spoke; but Rustum answered with a smile, —
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older. If the young are weak, the king
Errs strangely; for the king, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young:
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have! —
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply, —
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say, —
*Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,*
*And shuns to peril it with younger men.*"
And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply, —
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such word?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal? am not I myself?
But who for men of naught would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms:
Let not men say of Rustum, he was matched
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frowned; and Gudurz turned, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy, —
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and called
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel. The arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device;
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine a-top, a plume
Of horse-hair waved, a scarlet horse-hair plume.
So armed, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Followed him like a faithful hound at heel, —

Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And reared him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broidered green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were worked
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So followed, Rustum left his tents, and crossed
The camp, and to the Persian host appeared.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hailed; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands, —
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced;
And Sohrab armed in Haman's tent, and came.
And as a-field the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble short and bare, —
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blackened fingers makes her fire, —
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whitened window-panes, —
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused
His spirited air, and wondered who he was.
For very young he seemed, tenderly reared;
Like some young cypress, tall and dark and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound, —
So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.
And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckoned to him with his hand, and said, —
"O thou young man, the air of heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe:
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be governed: quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly. Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streaked with its first gray hairs; hope filled his soul,
And he ran forward, and embraced his knees,
And clasped his hand within his own, and said, —

"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? Speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turned away, and spake to his own soul,—
"Ah me! I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say, *Rustum is here!*
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes;
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry,—
'I challenged once, when the two armies camped
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turned, and sternly spake aloud,—
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast called
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face, and flee!
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were revealed,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this,—
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answered, on his feet,—
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fight me so!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I;
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall;
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,—
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,—
We know not, and no search will make us know:
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spoke; and Rustum answered not, but hurled
His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
That long has towered in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hissed, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide. Then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopped trunk it was, and huge,

Still rough, — like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in wintertime
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs, — so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum followed his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand.
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he looked on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said, —
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st thou art not Rustum; be it so!
Who art thou, then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too, —
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touched before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"
He ceased; but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regained his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mailed right hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soiled
His stately crest, and dimmed his glittering arms.
His breast heaved, his lips foamed, and twice his voice
Was choked with rage; at last these words broke way: —
"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curled minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war: I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone,
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks and thy girl's wiles."
He spoke: and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword; at once they rushed
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dashed with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters

Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees, — such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hailed.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict: for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and darked the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapped the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapped, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And laboring breath. First Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach the skin,
And Rustum plucked it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horse-hair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bowed his head. But then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh the horse,
Who stood at hand, uttered a dreadful cry:
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pained desert-lion, who all day
Has trailed the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand;
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it crossed his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quailed not, but rushed on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bowed
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remained alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted, *Rustum!* Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed: back he recoiled one step,
And scanned with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewildered, and he dropped
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reeled, and staggering back sank to the ground.
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair, —
Saw Rustum standing safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab wounded on the bloody sand.
Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began, —
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent;
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied, —
"Unknown thou art, yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For, were I matched with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,

They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerved my arm, —
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfixed an unarmed foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear:
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And followed her to find her where she fell
Far off; anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers, — never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by, —
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
And with a cold, incredulous voice, he said, —
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied, —
"Ah, yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear, —
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance, be?
Oh, could I live till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done.
But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more;
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."
He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listened, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he called back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all —
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deemed that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deemed he: yet he listened, plunged in thought;
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gathered in his eyes;
For he remembered his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds, — so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother in her bloom;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child

With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time, —
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand;
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass, — so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said, —
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved!
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false: thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son: one child he had, —
But one, — a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us, —
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answered him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die.
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said, —
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men;
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, pricked upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees tottered, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailèd hand,
That the hard iron corselet clanked aloud;
And to his heart he pressed the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said, —
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And showed a sign in faint vermilion points
Pricked; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift, — at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands, —
So delicately pricked the sign appeared
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin which of old reared Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and reared, and loved;
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scanned it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touched it with his hand, and said, —
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp cry, —
*O boy — thy father!* and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud passed before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kissed his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,

And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirched his hair, —
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutched his sword,
To draw it, and forever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said, —
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it! But fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this. I find
My father, let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say, *My son!*
Quick, quick! for numbered are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away, —
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind;
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."
So said he; and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kissed him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one, then to the other, moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears rolled down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said, —
"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should then have rotted on their nimble joints,
When first they bore thy master to this field!"
But Sohrab looked upon the horse, and said, —
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I!
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuffed the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter, soaked with wine,
And said, *O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!* But I
Have never known my grandsire's furrowed face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,

Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewailed, —
"Oh that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied, —
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live
As some are born to be obscure, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them: what have they done?
They followed me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me, —
Thou, and the snow-haired Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all;
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry, —
*Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,*
*Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!*
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied, —
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive, — my bitterest foes,
And they who were called champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have, —
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say, *O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
*For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!*
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."
Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied, —
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laving thy dear master in his grave."
And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said, —

"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."
He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flowed with the stream; all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soiled,
Like the soiled tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gathered, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
In-doors from the sun's eye; his head drooped low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay,—
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he opened them,
And fixed them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebbed, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-reared
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side,—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darkened all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river-marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon; he flowed
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcelled Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles,—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,
A foiled circuitous wanderer,—till at last
The longed-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

## THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

[Publ. 1849.]

COME, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go,—
Call once yet!

In a voice that she will know, —
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain, —
Surely she will come again!
Call her once, and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down:
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come, though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay, —
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea;
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'T will be Easter-time in the world — ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, merman! here with thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?
Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah! she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,

And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door:
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell forever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side,
And then come back down,
Singing, "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea."

## PHILOMELA

[Publ. 1853]

Hark! ah, the nightingale —
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark! what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain.
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy racked heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass.
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and seared eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia, —
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again — thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

## DOVER BEACH

[Publ. 1853]

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery: we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

## THE LAST WORD

Creep into thy narrow bed, —
Creep, and let no more be said.
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.
Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired: best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee;
Fired their ringing shot, and passed,
Hotly charged — and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

## MORALITY

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 't were done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask how *she* viewed thy self-control,
Thy struggling, tasked morality, —
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
"Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

"There is no effort on *my* brow;
I do not strive, I do not weep:
I rush with the swift spheres, and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once — but where?

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;

I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God."

## A SUMMER NIGHT

[Publ. 1852]

In the deserted, moon-blanched street,
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
Those windows which I gaze at, frown,
Silent and white, unopening down,
Repellent as the world; but see,
A break between the housetops shows
The moon! and lost behind her, fading dim
Into the dewy dark obscurity
Down at the far horizon's rim,
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

And to my mind the thought
Is on a sudden brought
Of a past night, and a far different scene.
Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
As clearly as at noon;
The spring-tide's brimming flow
Heaved dazzlingly between;
Houses, with long white sweep,
Girdled the glistening bay;
Behind, through the soft air,
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away.
That night was far more fair —
But the same restless pacings to and fro,
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say, —
*Hast thou, then, still the old unquiet breast,*
*Which neither deadens into rest,*
*Nor ever feels the fiery glow*
*That whirls the spirit from itself away,*
*But fluctuates to and fro,*
*Never by passion quite possessed,*
*And never quite benumbed by the world's sway?*
And I, I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield, and be
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning task-work give,
Dreaming of naught beyond their prison-wall.
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labor fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison, and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;
Nor doth he know how there prevail,
Despotic on that sea,
Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarred
By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves.
And then the tempest strikes him; and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguished face and flying hair,
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port, he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind; and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine!
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
Of languor, though so calm, and though so great

Are yet untroubled and unpassionate;
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
And, though so tasked, keep free from dust and soil!
I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain;
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
How it were good to live there, and breathe free;
How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

## THE BURIED LIFE

[Publ. 1853]

Light flows our war of mocking words; and yet,
Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile!
But there's a something in this breast,
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne;
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel?
I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved;
I knew they lived and moved
Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves — and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love! doth a like spell benumb
Our hearts, our voices? must we too be dumb?

Ah! well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordained!

Fate, which foresaw
How frivolous a baby man would be, —
By what distractions he would be possessed,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well-nigh change his own identity, —
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey
Even in his own despite his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us, — to know
Whence our lives come, and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then delves,
But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves, —
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on forever unexpressed.
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well — but 't is not true!
And then we will no more be racked
With inward striving, and demand
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power;
Ah, yes, and they benumb us at our call!

Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.

Only — but this is rare —
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed, —
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.

A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth forever chase
The flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast;
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.

## LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

[Publ. 1852]

In this lone, open glade I lie,
Screened by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crowned, red-boled pine-trees stand.

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy;
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass!
What endless, active life is here!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!
An air-stirred forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain sod
Where the tired angler lies, stretched out,
And, eased of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

In the huge world which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can!
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I, on men's impious uproar hurled,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world,
And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace forever new!
When I who watch them am away,
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass;
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others, give!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

## THE FUTURE

A wanderer is man from his birth.
He was born in a ship
On the breast of the river of Time;
Brimming with wonder and joy,
He spreads out his arms to the light,
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.
Whether he wakes

Where the snowy mountainous pass,
Echoing the screams of the eagles,
Hems in its gorges the bed
Of the new-born, clear-flowing stream;
Whether he first sees light
Where the river in gleaming rings
Sluggishly winds through the plain;
Whether in sound of the swallowing sea, —
As is the world on the banks,
So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each, as he glides,
Fable and dream
Of the lands which the river of Time
Had left ere he woke on its breast,
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.
Only the tract where he sails
He wots of; only the thoughts,
Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more
As she was by the sources of Time?
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough?
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then roamed on her breast,
Her vigorous, primitive sons?

What girl
Now reads in her bosom as clear
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well?
Who guards in her breast
As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

What bard,
At the height of his vision, can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near,
As flashing, as Moses felt,
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste?
Can rise and obey
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time
Now flows through with us, is the plain.
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
Bordered by cities, and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and short as the sights which we see.

And we say that repose has fled
Forever the course of the river of Time.
That cities will crowd to its edge
In a blacker, incessanter line;
That the din will be more on its banks,
Denser the trade on its stream,
Flatter the plain where it flows,
Fiercer the sun overhead;
That never will those on its breast
See an ennobling sight,
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the river of Time —
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream —
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current, and spotted with foam
As it draws to the ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast, —
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

## THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY

[Publ. 1853]

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropped grasses shoot another head;
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen

Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanched green,
Come, shepherd, and again renew the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late,—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here at noon comes back his stores to use,—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn,—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,
And here till sundown, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August-sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book.
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,
Of shining parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gypsy-lore,
And roamed the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deemed, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life inquired;
Whereat he answered, that the gypsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learned, will to the world impart;
But it needs Heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and returned no more.
But rumors hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the gypsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked boors
Had found him seated at their entering;

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheat-fields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moored to the cool bank in the summer-heats,

'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.
And then they land, and thou art seen no more!
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way;
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers, — the frail-leaved, white anemone,
Dark bluebells drenched with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves, —
But none hath words she can report of thee!

And, above Godstow Bridge, when haytime 's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass,
Where black-winged swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,
Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river-bank o'ergrown;
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air:
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And marked thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood, —
Where most the gypsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of gray,
Above the forest ground called Thessaly, —
The blackbird picking food
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge
Wrapped in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face toward Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climbed the hill,

And gained the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turned once to watch, while thick the snow-flakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-church hall:
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange.

But what — I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wandered from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join the gypsy-tribe.
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid, —
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

— No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'T is that from change to change their being rolls;
'T is that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,
And numb the elastic powers,
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our well-worn life, and are — what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why shouldst thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age,
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst — what we, alas! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day —
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it! but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,

And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipped patience for our only friend, —
Sad patience, too near neighbor to despair, —
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

Oh, born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gayly as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife, —
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silvered branches of the glade, —
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made:
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
— As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine,
And knew the intruders on his ancient home, —

The young light-hearted masters of the waves, —
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more sail,
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits, and unbent sails
There where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

## THYRSIS

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend*
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH,
*who died at Florence*, 1861

[Publ. 1867]

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks. —
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days, —
Thyrsis and I: we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The single-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone wears, the youthful Thames?
This winter-eve is warm;
Humid the air; leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers;
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening.

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night! —
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west — I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend the Gypsy-Scholar was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assayed.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's-holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart,
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irked him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lowered on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and filled his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing; he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day, —
When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,
With blossoms red and white of fallen May,
And chestnut-flowers, are strewn, —
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vexed garden-trees,

Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!*

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-william with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And bluebells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see, —
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed;
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now! —
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crownèd hair
Are flowers first opened on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

Oh, easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah! of our poor Thames she never heard;
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirred;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be;
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil;
I know the Fyfield tree;
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields;
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes: who knows them if not I?
But many a dingle on the loved hillside,
With thorns once studied, old white-blossomed trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High towered the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,

Unmoored our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We tracked the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass? —
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train, —
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemed so short
To the less-practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain tops, in cloudy air, —
The mountain tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet! Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field! 'T is done; and see,
Backed by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scattered farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale);

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there! —
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him:
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtile soul than thee,
I trow the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine, —

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!
Putting his sickle to the perilous gain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,

His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes;
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the soft canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 't is clear,
Our Gypsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honor, and a flattering crew;
'T is not in the world's market bought and sold:
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollowed, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound!
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour.
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat —
It failed, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
— Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:
*Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.*
*Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.*
*Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,*
*Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.*

## MEMORIAL VERSES

APRIL, 1850

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps; and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remained to come:
The last poetic voice is dumb, —
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bowed our head, and held our breath.
He taught us little, but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.

With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of passion with eternal law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watched the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said, —
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said, *Thou ailest here, and here!*
He looked on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life:
He said, *The end is everywhere,*
*Art still has truth, take refuge there!*
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world conveyed,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us; and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen, — on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth:
Smiles broke from us, and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sunlit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furled,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel:
Others will strengthen us to bear —
But who, ah! who will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly;
But who, like him, will put it by?
Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hear thy voice right, now he is gone.

## RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER, 1857

COLDLY, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent; hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the schoolroom windows; but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word *gloom* to my mind
Brings thee back in the light
Of thy radiant vigor again.
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,

Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live,
Prompt, unwearied, as here.
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad;
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest. This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about
Here and there, eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die, —
Perish; and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave.
We, we have chosen our path, —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance; but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth:
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock; the cataracts reply;
Lightnings dazzle our eyes;
Roaring torrents have breached
The track; the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep; the spray
Boils o'er its borders; aloft,
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin. Alas!
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends who set forth at our side
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On; and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs,
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks, —
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer, We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.
If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing: to us thou wast still

Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous and arid and vile;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost, —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted and fallen and died.

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? A God
Marshalled them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!

Years they have been in the wild:
Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,
Rising all around, overawe;
Factions divide them; their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
Ah! keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; on the rocks
Batter forever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye like angels appear,
Radiant with ardor divine.
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave.
Order, courage, return;
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

## STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

[Publ. 1867]

Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused
With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
Past the dark forges long disused,
The mule-track from Saint Laurent goes.
The bridge is crossed, and slow we ride,
Through forest, up the mountain side.

The autumnal evening darkens round,
The wind is up, and drives the rain;
While, hark! far down, with strangled sound
Doth the Dead Guier's stream complain,
Where that wet smoke, among the woods,
Over his boiling caldron broods.

Swift rush the spectral vapors white
Past limestone scars with ragged pines,
Showing — then blotting from our sight! —
Halt — through the cloud-drift something shines!
High in the valley, wet and drear,
The huts of Courrerie appear.

*Strike leftward!* cries our guide; and higher
Mounts up the stony forest-way.
At last the encircling trees retire;
Look! through the showery twilight gray,
What pointed roofs are these advance?
A palace of the kings of France?

Approach, for what we seek is here!
Alight, and sparely sup, and wait
For rest in this outbuilding near;
Then cross the sward, and reach that gate;
Knock; pass the wicket. Thou art come
To the Carthusians' world-famed home.

The silent courts, where night and day
Into their stone-carved basins cold
The splashing icy fountains play,
The humid corridors behold,
Where, ghost-like in the deepening night,
Cowled forms brush by in gleaming white!

The chapel, where no organ's peal
Invests the stern and naked prayer!
With penitential cries they kneel
And wrestle; rising then, with bare
And white uplifted faces stand,
Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan
Is buried in his cowl once more.
The cells! — the suffering Son of man
Upon the wall; the knee-worn floor;
And where they sleep, that wooden bed,
Which shall their coffin be when dead!

The library, where tract and tome
Not to feed priestly pride are there,
To him the conquering march of Rome,
Nor yet to amuse, as ours are:
They paint of souls the inner strife,
Their drops of blood, their death in life.

The garden, overgrown — yet mild,
See, fragrant herbs are flowering there:
Strong children of the Alpine wild
Whose culture is the brethren's care;
Of human tasks their only one,
And cheerful works beneath the sun.

Those halls, too, destined to contain
Each its own pilgrim-host of old,
From England, Germany, or Spain, —
All are before me! I behold
The house, the brotherhood austere.
And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,
Showed me the high, white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire.
Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
*What dost thou in this living tomb?*

Forgive me, masters of the mind!
At whose behest I long ago
So much unlearned, so much resigned:
I come not here to be your foe!
I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,
To curse and to deny your truth;

Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
But as, on some far northern strand,
Thinking of his own Gods, a Greek
In pity and mournful awe might stand
Before some fallen Runic stone;
For both were faiths, and both are gone.

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride:
I come to shed them at their side.

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,
Ye solemn seats of holy pain!
Take me, cowled forms, and fence me round,
Till I possess my soul again;
Till free my thoughts before me roll,
Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries, your faith is now
But a dead time's exploded dream;
My melancholy, sciolists say,
Is a passed mode, an outworn theme. —
As if the world had ever had
A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah! if it *be* passed, take away,
At least, the restlessness, the pain!
Be man henceforth no more a prey
To these out-dated stings again!
The nobleness of grief is gone:
Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But, — if you cannot give us ease, —
Last of the race of them who grieve,
Here leave us to die out with these
Last of the people who believe!
Silent, while years engrave the brow;
Silent — the best are silent now.

Achilles ponders in his tent,
The kings of modern thought are dumb;
Silent they are, though not content,
And wait to see the future come.
They have the grief men had of yore,
But they contend and cry no more.

Our fathers watered with their tears
This sea of time whereon we sail;
Their voices were in all men's ears
Who passed within their puissant hail.
Still the same ocean round us raves,
But we stand mute, and watch the waves.

For what availed it, all the noise
And outcry of the former men?
Say, have their sons achieved more joys?
Say, is life lighter now than then?
The sufferers died, they left their pain;
The pangs which tortured them remain.

What helps it now, that Byron bore,
With haughty scorn which mocked the smart,
Through Europe to the Ætolian shore
The pageant of his bleeding heart?
That thousands counted every groan,
And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze
Carried thy lovely wail away,
Musical through Italian trees
Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?
Inheritors of thy distress,
Have restless hearts one throb the less?

Or are we easier, to have read,
O Obermann! the sad, stern page,
Which tells us how thou hidd'st thy head
From the fierce tempest of thine age
In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau,
Or chalets near the Alpine snow?

Ye slumber in your silent grave! —
The world, which for an idle day
Grace to your mood of sadness gave,
Long since have flung her weeds away,
The eternal trifler breaks your spell;
But we — we learnt your lore too well!

Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age,
More fortunate, alas! than we,
Which without hardness will be sage,
And gay without frivolity.
Sons of the world, oh! speed those years;
But, while we wait, allow our tears!

Allow them! We admire with awe
The exulting thunder of your race;
You give the universe your law,
You triumph over time and space:
Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
We praise them, but they are not ours.

We are like children reared in shade
Beneath some old-world abbey wall,
Forgotten in a forest-glade,
And secret from the eyes of all.
Deep, deep the greenwood round them waves,
Their abbey, and its close of graves!

But, where the road runs near the stream,
Oft through the trees they catch a glance
Of passing troops in the sun's beam, —
Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance;
Forth to the world those soldiers fare,
To life, to cities, and to war.

And through the woods, another way,
Faint bugle-notes from far are borne,
Where hunters gather, staghounds bay,
Round some old forest-lodge at morn.
Gay dames are there, in sylvan green;
Laughter and cries — those notes between!

The banners flashing through the trees
Make their blood dance, and chain their eyes;
That bugle-music on the breeze
Arrests them with a charmed surprise.
Banner by turns and bugle woo:
*Ye shy recluses, follow too!*

O children, what do ye reply?
"Action and pleasure, will ye roam
Through these secluded dells to cry
And call us? but too late ye come!
Too late for us your call ye blow,
Whose bent was taken long ago.

"Long since we pace this shadowed nave;
We watch those yellow tapers shine,
Emblems of hope over the grave,
In the high altar's depth divine.
The organ carries to our ear
Its accents of another sphere.

"Fenced early in this cloistral round
Of revery, of shade, of prayer,
How should we grow in other ground?
How can we flower in foreign air?
— Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease;
And leave our desert to its peace!"

# ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

[First published in 1833; much altered in 1842.]

### PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly
Down to tower'd Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

### PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed:
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

### PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

## ŒNONE

[First printed 1833; materially altered 1842.]

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.
Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering, forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;
The grasshopper is silent in the grass;
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops, the golden bee
Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape; for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills;
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine.
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft;
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone; white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart:
'"My own Œnone,
Beautiful-browed Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingraven
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, "This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 't were due;

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon; one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piny sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her to whom
Coming thro' heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honor," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
"Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest Gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

'"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die
Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, O, rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,

To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."
'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder; from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece."
She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my sight for fear;
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Death sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born. Her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

[First printed 1833; altered in 1842.]

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward the land,
'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West; thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, 'We will return no more;'
And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is their any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence — ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold,
Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold

Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile;
'T is hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet — while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly —
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine —
To watch the emerald-color'd water falling
Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone;
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotus-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 't is whisper'd — down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

## ULYSSES

[First printed in 1842, and unaltered.]

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known, — cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honor'd of them all, —
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle, —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me, —
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are, —
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

## TITHONUS

[First printed in 1860; afterwards included in the 'Enoch Arden' volume in 1864.]

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.
Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,

Like wealthy men who care not how they
give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd
their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted
me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me
maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with
tears
To hear me? Let me go; take back thy
gift.
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet
for all?
A soft air fans the cloud apart; there
comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was
born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer
steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoul-
ders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to
mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild
team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,
arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd
manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.
Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.
Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy
tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their
gifts.'
Ay me! ay me! with what another
heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt
my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-
warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and
sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.
Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the
steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the
homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground.
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my
grave;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

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[First published in the 'Holy Grail' volume.]

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower — but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

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[First printed in 1842, and unaltered.]

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;

But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

## SONGS

[From *The Princess*]

I

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O, we fell out, I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O, there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

II

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

III

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

IV

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!'

V

Home they brought her warrior dead;
She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry.
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

VI

'COME down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the fir'ths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
There thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air.
So waste not thou, but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

'In Memoriam' was first published in 1850. No changes were made in the second and third editions. In the fourth edition (1851) the present 59th section ('O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me?') was added. The present 39th section ('Old warder of these buried bones,' etc.) was added in the 'Miniature Edition' of the 'Poems' (1871).

Arthur Henry Hallam, to whose memory the poem is a tribute, was the son of Henry Hallam, the historian, and was born in London, February 1, 1811. In 1818 he spent some months with his parents in Italy and Switzerland, where he became familiar with the French language, which he had already learned to read with ease. Latin he also learned to read with facility in little more than a year. When only eight or nine years old, he began to write tragedies which showed remarkable precocity.

After a brief course in a preparatory school he was sent to Eton, where he remained till 1827. He did not distinguish himself as a classical scholar, being more interested in English literature, especially the earlier dramatists. He took an active part in the Debating Society, where he showed great power in argumentative discussion; and during his last year in the school he began to write for the 'Eton Miscellany.' After leaving Eton he spent eight months with his parents in Italy, where he mastered the language and the works of Dante and Petrarch.

In October, 1829, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. There he soon became acquainted with the Tennysons, and thus began the ever-memorable friendship of which 'In Memoriam' is the monument. Like his friends, he was the pupil of the Rev. William Whewell. In 1831 he obtained the first prize for an English declamation on the conduct of the Independent party during the Civil War. In consequence of this success, he was called upon to deliver an oration in the chapel before the Christmas vacation, and chose as a subject the influence of Italian upon English literature. He also gained a prize for an English essay on the philosophical writings of Cicero.

He left Cambridge on taking his decree in January, 1832. He resided from that time with his father in London in 67 Wimpole Street, referred to in 'In Memoriam,' vii.: —

> Dark house, by which once more I stand
> Here in the long unlovely street.

Arthur used to say to his friends, 'You know you will always find us at sixes and sevens.' At the earnest desire of his father he applied himself vigorously to the study of law in the Inner Temple, entering, in the month of October, 1832, the office of an eminent conveyancer, with whom he continued till his departure from England in the following summer.

His father tells the remainder of the sad story very briefly. Arthur accompanied him to Germany in the beginning of August. In returning to Vienna from Pesth, a wet day probably gave rise to an intermittent fever with very slight symptoms, which were apparently subsiding, when a sudden rush of blood to the head caused his death on the 15th of September, 1833. It appeared on examination that the cerebral vessels were weak, and that there was a lack of energy in the heart. In the usual chances of humanity a few more years would probably have been fatal.

His 'loved remains' were brought to England and interred on the 3d of January, 1834, in Clevedon Church, Somersetshire, belonging to his maternal grandfather, Sir Abraham Elton. The place was selected by his father not only from its connection with the family, but also from its sequestered situation on a lone hill overlooking the Bristol Channel.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

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I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss.
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
A web is woven across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun;

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands —
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own, —
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'other friends remain,'
That 'loss is common to the race' —
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more.
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son,
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O, somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking 'this will please him best,'
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night;
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine,
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall,
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go, I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air,
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too;

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine,
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day;
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI

What words are these have fallen from me?
Can calm despair and wild unrest
Be tenants of a single breast,
Or Sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or storm,
But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

XVII

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week; the days go by;
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars;

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee,
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII

'T is well; 't is something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'T is little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind.
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
'This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers: 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;
Ye never knew the sacred dust.
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb,
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan;

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far,
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life, — the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it, for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fallen as soon as built —

O, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see — in Him is no before —
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ.
The moon is hid, the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new—
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet.
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: 'They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?'
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not, or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays
Her early heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good.
O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
'The cheeks drop in, the body bows;
Man dies, nor is there hope in dust;'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive.'
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
'Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
'I am not worthy even to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine, —
And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said, —

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd,
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow, — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men, —
What whisper'd from her lying lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher,
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be —
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death,
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.
He still outstript me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times — he knows not whence —
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years —
If Death so taste Lethean springs —
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O, turn thee round, resolve the doubt:
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I;'

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'
And finds 'I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd,
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good.
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencill'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death;
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall;
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
The Spirit of true love replied;
'Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue;

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
Abide; thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

LIII

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green;

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good, define it well;
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;

An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone;
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song.
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind.
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be?

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good?

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I 'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone;
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by;
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?'

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change replied
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXII

Tho' if an eye that 's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With 'Love 's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt;

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost;
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door;

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs;
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:
They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
I found an angel of the night;

The voice was low, the look was bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled.

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf;
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long present of the past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong,
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath
I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out — to some one of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd.

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain —
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No — mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,' —
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves, the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burthen of the weeks,
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,
'My love shall now no further range;
There cannot come a mellower change,
For now is love mature in ear'?

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
'My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain
It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth;
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart:
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long;
Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou shouldst link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;
And whether love for him have drain'd
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And show'd him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears.
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall:
''T is hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo?

LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O, tell me where the senses mix,
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy;

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,

The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge,' he said, 'in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise.

'T was well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat
That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm.
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;

And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when clasp't in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb,
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name,
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;

And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd;
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fallen leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time — the shocks of Chance —

The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinaï's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
I look'd on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss;
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
'I cannot understand; I love.'

XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That city. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me;
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings.
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

C

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the Lesser Wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake,
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go; my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me; distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever. Then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea;

And when they learnt that I must go,
They wept and wail'd, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore
And roll'd the floods in grander space,
The maidens gather'd strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck;

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:
'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand:
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I 'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years;
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown, —

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise:

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain, and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too, and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone,
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead,
Less yearning for the friendship fled
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn

A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII

O, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dewdrop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess, —

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,

And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,
She did but look through dimmer eyes;
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth;

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within the court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, even tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags!
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new—
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal,
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

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O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house, nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years; they went and came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,

That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and again
The 'Wilt thou?' ask'd, till out of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn.
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favor'd horses wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire.
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man that with me trod
This planet was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

## SONGS

[From *Maud*]

### I

I

COME into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one,
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate.

The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead,
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

II

I

O that 't were possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

II

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

III

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee.
Ah, Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be!

IV

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

VI

'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet.
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet.
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled.
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold!

VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'T is the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

IX

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame;
It crosses here, it crosses there,

Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall!

XII

Would the happy spirit descend
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me.
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

This poem, originally published on the day of the Duke's funeral in 1852, was probably written in some haste. It underwent considerable revision before it was reprinted in 1853, and was further retouched before it appeared with 'Maud' in 1855.

I

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation;
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation;
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute!
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fallen at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the wind that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done.
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever

Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd,
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds.
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd,
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom.
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame,
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song!

VI

'Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?' —
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O, give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square,
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim

With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else there nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers,
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control!
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings!
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right.
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo! the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory.
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue

Far on in summers that we shall not see.
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung.
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will,
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears;
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears;
The black earth yawns; the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great. —
Gone, but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of this renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him!

## IDYLLS OF THE KING

'*Flos Regum Arthurus.*' — JOSEPH OF EXETER

### DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory — since he held them dear,
Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself — I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —
These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,
'Who reverenced his conscience as his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;
Who loved one only and who clave to her — '
Her — over all whose realms to their last isle,
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,
The shadow of his loss drew like eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost him; he is gone.
We know him now; all narrow jealousies
Are silent, and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that;
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne
And blackens every blot; for where is he
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his?
Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons
Hope more for these than some inheritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —

Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
Break not, for thou art royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside thee that ye made
One light together, but has past and leaves
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow thee,
The love of all thy sons encompass thee,
The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,
The love of all thy people comfort thee,
Till God's love set thee at his side again!

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Leodogran, the king of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle and, ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen host
Swarm'd over-seas, and harried what was left.
And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,
And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.
And after these King Arthur for a space,
And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,
Drew all their petty princedoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,
And none or few to scare or chase the beast;
So that wild dog and wolf and boar and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat
To human sucklings; and the children, housed
In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions here again
And Cæsar's eagle. Then his brother king,
Urien, assail'd him; last a heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood,
And on the spike that split the mother's heart
Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But — for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by those
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son' — the King
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us thou!
For here between the man and beast we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,
But heard the call and came; and Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his knights,
And many of these in richer arms than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. Then he drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast, and fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight,
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
Of those great lords and barons of his realm
Flash'd forth and into war; for most of these,
Colleaguing with a score of petty kings,
Made head against him, crying: 'Who is he
That he should rule us? who hath proven him
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.
This is the son of Gorloïs, not the King;
This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere,
And thinking as he rode: 'Her father said
That there between the man and beast they die.
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
Up to my throne and side by side with me?
What happiness to reign a lonely king,
Vext — O ye stars that shudder over me,
O earth that soundest hollow under me,
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be join'd
To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will nor work my work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm
Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,
Then might we live together as one life,
And reigning with one will in everything
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make it live.'

Thereafter — as he speaks who tells the tale —
When Arthur reach'd a field of battle bright
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world
Was all so clear about him that he saw
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,
And even in high day the morning star.
So when the King had set his banner broad
At once from either side, with trumpet blast,
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto blood,
The long-lanced battle let their horses run.
And now the barons and the kings prevail'd,
And now the King, as here and there that war
Went swaying; but the Powers who walk the world
Made lightnings and great thunders over him,
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main might,
And mightier of his hands with every blow,
And leading all his knighthood threw the kings,
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemont of Wales,
Claudius, and Clariance of Northumberland,
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
To one who sins, and deems himself alone
And all the world asleep, they swerved and brake
Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the brands
That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho! they yield!'
So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved
And honor'd most. 'Thou dost not doubt me King,
So well thine arm hath wrought for me today.'
'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of God
Descends upon thee in the battle-field.
I know thee for my King!' Whereat the two,
For each had warded either in the fight,

Sware on the field of death a deathless love.
And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in man;
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field he sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,
Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in heart
Debating — 'How should I that am a king,
However much he holp me at my need,
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?' — lifted his voice, and call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and said:
'Sir King, there be but two old men that know;
And each is twice as old as I; and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art, and one
Is Merlin's master — so they call him — Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the scholar ran
Before the master, and so far that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied:
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,
Then beast and man had had their share of me;
But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the king said:
'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase; but wherefore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorloïs,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?'

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning, spake —
For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the King —

'Sir, there be many rumors on this head;
For there be those who hate him in their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than man;
And there be those who deem him more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven. But my belief
In all this matter — so ye care to learn —
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time
The prince and warrior Gorloïs, he that held
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne;
And daughters had she borne him, — one whereof,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love;
But she, a stainless wife to Gorloïs,
So loathed the bright dishonor of his love
That Gorloïs and King Uther went to war,
And overthrown was Gorloïs and slain.
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,
Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,
And there was none to call to but himself.
So, compass'd by the power of the king,
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,
And with a shameful swiftness; afterward,
Not many moons, King Uther died himself,

Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
After him, lest the realm should go to wrack.
And that same night, the night of the new year,
By reason of the bitterness and grief
That vext his mother, all before his time
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
To Merlin, to be holden far apart
Until his hour should come, because the lords
Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the child
Piecemeal among them, had they known; for each
But sought to rule for his own self and hand,
And many hated Uther for the sake
Of Gorloïs. Wherefore Merlin took the child,
And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight
And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him with her own;
And no man knew. And ever since the lords
Have foughten like wild beasts among themselves,
So that the realm has gone to wrack; but now,
This year, when Merlin — for his hour had come —
Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,
Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir, your king,"
A hundred voices cried: "Away with him!
No king of ours! a son of Gorloïs he,
Or else the child of Anton, and no king,
Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his craft,
And while the people clamor'd for a king,
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great lords
Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the king debated with himself
If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
Or born the son of Gorloïs after death,
Or Uther's son and born before his time,
Or whether there were truth in anything
Said by these three, there came to Camelliard,
With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent;
Whom as he could, not as he would, the king
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat:
'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his men
Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye this king —
So many those that hate him, and so strong,
So few his knights, however brave they be —
Hath body enow to hold his foemen down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell thee: few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him;
For I was near him when the savage yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat
Crowned on the daïs, and his warriors cried,
"Be thou the king, and we will work thy will
Who love thee." Then the King in low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his own self
That when they rose, knighted from kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake, and cheer'd his Table Round
With large, divine, and comfortable words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
A momentary likeness of the King;
And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur, smote

Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three rays,
One falling upon each of three fair queens
Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

'And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his own —
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the King his huge cross-hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out. A mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;
But there was heard among the holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep — calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world — and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it — rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye — the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it — on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
"Take me," but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
"Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far-off." So this great brand the king
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
'The swallow and the swift are near akin,
But thou art closer to this noble prince,
Being his own dear sister;' and she said,
'Daughter of Gorloïs and Ygerne am I;'
'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd the king.
She answer'd, 'These be secret things,' and sign'd
To those two sons to pass, and let them be.
And Gawain went, and breaking into song
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw;
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
And there half-heard — the same that afterward
Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer: 'What know I?
For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
Was Gorloïs; yea, and dark was Uther too,
Wellnigh to blackness; but this king is fair
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
Moreover, always in my mind I hear
A cry from out the dawning of my life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
"O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways of the world."'

'Ay,' said the king, 'and hear ye such a cry?
But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?'

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell thee true.
He found me first when yet a little maid.
Beaten I had been for a little fault
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
And flung myself down on a bank of heath,
And hated this fair world and all therein,
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead; and he —
I know not whether of himself he came,
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk
Unseen at pleasure — he was at my side,

And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,
And dried my tears, being a child with me.
And many a time he came, and evermore
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,
Stern too at times, and then I loved him not,
But sweet again, and then I loved him well.
And now of late I see him less and less,
But those first days had golden hours for me,
For then I surely thought he would be king.

'But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage;
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the king,
Uther, before he died; and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still king, and passing forth to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night — a night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost —
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame;
And down the wave and in the flame was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried, "The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!" And the fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
Free sky and stars. "And this same child," he said,
"Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace
Till this were told." And saying this the seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth —
The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas —
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
In riddling triplets of old time, and said: —

'"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

'"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

'"Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows;
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou
Fear not to give this King thine only child,
Guinevere; so great bards of him will sing
Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
For comfort after their wage-work is done,
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,
But pass, again to come, and then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,
But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,
Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,
In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze
And made it thicker; while the phantom king
Sent out at times a voice; and here or there
Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest
Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of ours,
No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'
Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze
Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven,
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved
And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth
And bring the Queen, and watch'd him from the gates;
And Lancelot past away among the flowers —
For then was latter April — and return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King
That morn was married, while in stainless white,
The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him, his knights
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,
The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,
The sun of May descended on their King,
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,
Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns
A voice as of the waters, while the two
Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless love.
And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is mine.
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!'
To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,
'King and my lord, I love thee to the death!'
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake:
'Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine
Great lords from Rome before the portal stood,
In scornful stillness gazing as they past;
Then while they paced a city all on fire
With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King: —

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May!
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world — "Let the King reign!"

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
Flash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon helm,
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

'Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret word.
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

'Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength, and die the lust!
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,
The King is king, and ever wills the highest.
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'The King will follow Christ, and we the King,
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.
Fall battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!'

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.
There at the banquet those great lords from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
Strode in and claim'd their tribute as of yore.
But Arthur spake: 'Behold, for these have sworn
To wage my wars, and worship me their King;
The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And we that fight for our fair father Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old
To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay.' So those great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
Were all one will, and thro' that strength the King
Drew in the petty princedoms under him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame
The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd.

## THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT
GERAINT AND ENID
BALIN AND BALAN
MERLIN AND VIVIEN
LANCELOT AND ELAINE
THE HOLY GRAIL
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE
THE LAST TOURNAMENT
GUINEVERE

### GARETH AND LYNETTE

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance, if lance
Were mine to use — O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows
And mine is living blood. Thou dost His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall

Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled to —
Since the good mother holds me still a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he came
With Modred hither in the summer-time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me," said so — he —
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is alway sullen — what care I?'

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair
Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?' She laugh'd,
'Thou art but a wild-goose to question it.'
'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he said,
'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-beloved,
An 't were but of the goose and golden eggs.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:
'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
And there was ever haunting round the palm
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
The splendor sparkling from aloft, and thought,
"An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,
Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings."
But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
One that had loved him from his childhood caught
And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break thy neck,
I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake his neck,
But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away.'

To whom the mother said,
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,
And handed down the golden treasure to him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:
'Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why he, or she,
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — *had* the thing I spake of been
Mere gold — but this was all of that true steel
Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashings in the nest,
That sent him from his senses. Let me go.'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said:
'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love

I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often chance
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,
Frights to my heart. But stay; follow the deer
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;
So make thy manhood mightier day by day.
Sweet is the chase; and I will seek thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man.'

Then Gareth: 'An ye hold me yet for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a king, like ours.
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the king
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd —
But to be won by force — and many men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
And these were the conditions of the king:
That save he won the first by force, he needs
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye —
Yea — some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
And one — they call'd her Fame; and one — O mother,'
How can ye keep me tether'd to you? — Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King —
Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said:
'Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven king —
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King
When I was frequent with him in my youth,
And heard him kingly speak, and doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,
Of closest kin to me. Yet — wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven king?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly: 'Not an hour,
So that ye yield me — I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it — your full leave to go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome
From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd
The idolaters, and made the people free?
Who should be king save him who makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily: 'Will ye walk thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must; only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother, — I demand.'

And Gareth cried:
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking at him:
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied:
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And, since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves;
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd,
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour
When, waken'd by the wind which with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still had tended on him from his birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The birds made
Melody on branch and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green,
And the live green had kindled into flowers,
For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.
At times the summit of the high city flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-way down
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below;
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord;
Here is a city of enchanters, built
By fairy kings.' The second echo'd him,
'Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home
To northward, that this king is not the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first again,
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
In his own blood, his princedom, youth, and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.
And there was no gate like it under heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood; all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;

But like the cross her great and goodly arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld.
And drops of water fell from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
And in the space to left of her, and right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space
Stared at the figures that at last it seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings
Began to move, seethe, twine, and curl. They call'd
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes
So long that even to him they seem'd to move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three, to whom
From out thereunder came an ancient man,
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my sons?'

Then Gareth: 'We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to see
The glories of our King; but these, my men,—
Your city moved so weirdly in the mist—
Doubt if the King be king at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy kings and queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision; and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer, playing on him
And saying: 'Son, I have seen the good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air;
And here is truth, but an it please thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king
And fairy queens have built the city, son;
They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real.
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake
Anger'd: 'Old master, reverence thine own beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been
To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied:
'Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards:
"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,

Elusion, and occasion, and evasion" ?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending here
Turn'd to the right, and past along the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said: 'My men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I.
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere,
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall; his arms
Clash'd, and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love;
And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendor of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom — and look'd no more —
But felt his young heart hammering in his ears,
And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I speak.'
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights that ranged about the throne
Clear honor shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King:
'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with violence;
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
Perforce and left us neither gold nor field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold or field?'
To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye.'

And Arthur: 'Have thy pleasant field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did
Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to him:
'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him dead,
And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the son.
So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,

Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son.'

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to him,
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,
'A boon, Sir King! even that thou grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full hall —
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag.'

But Arthur: 'We sit King, to help the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the flames;
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue; but get thee hence —
Lest that rough humor of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,
According to the justice of the King.
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,
Delivering that his lord, the vassal king,
Was even upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace
Had made his goodly cousin Tristram knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?'
For, midway down the side of that long hall,
A stately pile, — whereof along the front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields, —
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was named.
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall:
When some good knight had done one noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain,
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare, without a sign
Saving the name beneath. And Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of his crown
Than make him knight because men call him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands
From war among themselves, but left them kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,

As Mark would sully the low state of churl;
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced for ever — craven — a man of plots,
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings —
No fault of thine; let Kay the seneschal
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied —
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!'

And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,
Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,
'A boon, Sir King,' — his voice was all ashamed, —
'For see ye not how weak and hunger-worn
I seem — leaning on these? grant me to serve
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.
Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King:
'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien
Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
Root-bitten by white lichen:

'Lo ye now!
This fellow hath broken from some abbey, where,
God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,
However that might chance! but an he work,
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near: 'Sir Seneschal,
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the hounds;
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know.
Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands
Large, fair, and fine! — Some young lad's mystery —
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him.'

Then Kay: 'What murmurest thou of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like — mystery!
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
For horse and armor. Fair and fine, forsooth!
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day
Undo thee not — and leave my man to me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage,
Ate with young lads his portion by the door,
And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
Would hustle and harry him, and labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd himself
With all obedience to the King, and wrought

All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.
And when the thralls had talk among themselves,
And one would praise the love that linkt the King
And Lancelot — how the King had saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's —
For Lancelot was first in the tournament,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field —
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told
How once the wandering forester at dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
'He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die' —
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud
That first they mock'd, but, after, reverenced him.
Or Gareth, telling some prodigious tale
Of knights who sliced a red life-bubbling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone,
Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go.
Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him swear,
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney once,
When both were children, and in lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end —
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.
He laugh'd, he sprang. 'Out of the smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee —
These news be mine, none other's — nay, the King's —
Descend into the city;' whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt
For pastime; yea, he said it; joust can I.
Make me thy knight — in secret! let my name
Be hidden, and give me the first quest, I spring
Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him:
'Son, the good mother let me know thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees:
'My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.
For uttermost obedience make demand

Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King:
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King:
'But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,
Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd:
'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it?
Let be my name until I make my name!
My deeds will speak; it is but for a day.'
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily:
'I have given him the first quest; he is not proven.
Look therefore, when he calls for this in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see,
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain.'

Then that same day there past into the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.
She into hall past with her page and cried:

'O King, for thou hast driven the foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset
By bandits, every one that owns a tower
The lord for half a league. Why sit ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,
Till even the lonest hold were all as free
From cursed bloodshed as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor mine
Rest; so my knighthood keep the vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?'

'My name?' she said —
'Lynette, my name; noble; my need, a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous. A river
Runs in three loops about her living-place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth,
And of that four the mightiest, holds her stay'd
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with him;
And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him thy chief man
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to overthrow,
Then wed, with glory; but she will not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd:
'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the realm. But say, these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the men?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they will;

Courteous or bestial from the moment, such
As have nor law nor king; and three of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit more wise
The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night and oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or scape the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the throng,
'A boon, Sir King — this quest!' then — for he mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull —
'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,
And I can topple over a hundred such.
Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow. 'Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be knight —
Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath
Slew the may-white. She lifted either arm,
'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave.'
Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the King,
Took horse, descended the slope street, and past
The weird white gate, and paused without beside
The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-knave!'

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,
At one end one that gave upon a range
Of level pavement where the King would pace
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;
And out by this main doorway past the King.
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose
High that the highest-crested helm could ride
Therethro' nor graze; and by this entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,
A war-horse of the best, and near it stood
The two that out of north had follow'd him.
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
And from it, like a fuel-smother'd fire
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the shield
And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt

With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen came
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,
'God bless the King, and all his fellowship!'
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
Down the slope street, and past without the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,
His owner, but remembers all, and growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms — the King hath past his time —
My scullion knave! Thralls, to your work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?
Begone! — my knave! — belike and like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth
So shook his wits they wander in his prime —
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave!
Tut, he was tame and meek enow with me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
Well — I will after my loud knave, and learn
Whether he know me for his master yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire —
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said:
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in thee?
Abide; take counsel, for this lad is great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword.'
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are over-fine
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies;'
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
Mutter'd the damsel: 'Wherefore did the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than — O sweet heaven! O, fie upon him! —
His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew —
And there were none but few goodlier than he —
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is mine.
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,
Or shrew or weasel, nipt her slender nose
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,
'Hence!
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease.
And look who comes behind;' for there was Kay.
'Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,
'Master no more! too well I know thee, ay —
The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall.'
'Have at thee then,' said Kay; they shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke:

'What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master — thou! —
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon! — to me
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently, 'say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with, knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd again
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood;
And Gareth following was again beknaved:

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves.
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?
Fight, an thou canst; I have miss'd the only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof a mere,
Round as the red eye of an eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and shouts
Ascended, and there brake a servingman
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,
'They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere.'
Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the wrong'd,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee.'
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the pines
He plunged; and there, black-shadow'd nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life

Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye ?'

Gareth sharply spake:
'None ! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage ?'

Whereat the baron saying, 'I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh
Broke from Lynette: 'Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave ! —
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay — for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harborage,
Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers, where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd —
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,
"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I."

Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
"Go therefore," and so gives the quest to him —
Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then began:

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not; but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And saver of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The saver of my life.'

And Gareth said,
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,
'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she replied:

'I fly no more; I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool ?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee; then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously:
'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall,
For whom we let thee pass?' 'Nay, nay,' she said,
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here
His kitchen-knave; and look thou to thyself.
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight but knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came. Their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him shone,
Immingled with heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him: 'Wherefore stare ye so?
Thou shakest in thy fear. There yet is time;
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave.'

Said Gareth: 'Damsel, whether knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge:
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.
Avoid; for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest!
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own.'
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand

He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!'
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fallen, 'Take not my life; I yield.'
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me
Good — I accord it easily as a grace.'
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion! I of thee?
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!'
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine — farewell; and, damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled;
Then when he came upon her, spake: 'Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge,
The savor of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier; but the wind hath changed,
I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,
'"O morning star" — not that tall felon there
Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown, —

"O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and away,
For hard by here is one that guards a ford —
The second brother in their fool's parable —
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame; thou art not knight but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laughingly:
'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest,
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my comates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,
"Guard it," and there was none to meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee — and — knight or knave —
The knave that doth thee service as full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-loop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower
That blows a globe of after arrowlets
Ten-thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?'

And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms.'
'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and, vizoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met mid-stream; no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill. Four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded, and Gareth sent him to the King.
'Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.
'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?'
'Nay, not a point; nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I saw it.

'"O sun" — not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness —

"O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of love-song or of love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance, —

'"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,
To garnish meats with? hath not our good King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

'"O birds that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth
May-music growing with the growing light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare —
So runs thy fancy — these be for the spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
There stands the third fool of their allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight
That named himself the Star of Evening stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the madman there
Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she cried,
'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?
Thy ward is higher up; but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?' and the damsel cried:

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir Star.
Art thou not old?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys.'
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in brag!
But that same strength which threw the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening.'

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
'Approach and arm me!' With slow steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the star of even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone.
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him again,
But up like fire he started; and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!'
He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to strike
Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the while,
'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good knight-knave —
O knave, as noble as any of all the knights —
Shame me not, shame me not. I have prophesied —
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round —
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd skin —
Strike — strike — the wind will never change again.'
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armor off him,
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,
And could not wholly bring him under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.
'I have thee now;' but forth that other sprang,
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining even his uttermost
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said:
'I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

'"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colors after rain,
Shine sweetly; thrice my love hath smiled on me."

'Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added — Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —

Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee. Noble I am, and thought the King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast maz'd my wit. I marvel what thou art.'

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me;
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
The war of Time against the soul of man.
And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.
Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt and read —
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt —
'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES,' — 'HESPERUS' —
'NOX' — 'MORS,' beneath five figures, armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a shape that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment, and loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
Who comes behind?'

For one — delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood —
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops —
His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,
'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend.'
And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;
But when they closed — in a moment — at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world —
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within his hands
He laugh'd. The laughter jarr'd upon Lynette.
Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?'

'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,
And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness —
Device and sorcery and unhappiness —
Out, sword; we are thrown!' And Lancelot answer'd: 'Prince,
O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole
As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth: 'Thou — Lancelot! — thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make — which could not chance —
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lancelot — thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant: 'Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,
Who being still rebuked would answer still
Courteous as any knight — but now, if knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd upon;
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,
I hate thee and forever.'

And Lancelot said:
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise,
To call him shamed who is but overthrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven, and thy good horse
And thou are weary; yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,
And when reviled hast answer'd graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, knight,
Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said:
'Ay, well — ay, well — for worse than being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find.' And when they sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed:
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep —
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot,' — and she clapt her hands —
'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accomplishment.'

Said Lancelot: 'Peradventure he you name
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,' she said,
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd the shield:
'Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord! —
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence; let us go.'

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho' summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.
A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe falls!'
An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor pealing there!'
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying:
'Yield, yield him this again; 't is he must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield. Wonders ye have done,
Miracles ye cannot. Here is glory enow
In having flung the three. I see thee maim'd,
Mangled; I swear thou canst not fling the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, prince,' she cried,
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day,
But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass
Chilling the night; nor have I heard the voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad, and girl — yea, the soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant flesh,
Monster! O prince, I went for Lancelot first,
The quest is Lancelot's; give him back the shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man;
Thus — and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than himself;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword, and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were his words.

Then Gareth: 'Here be rules. I know but one —
To dash against mine enemy and to win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thee!' sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd, 'There.'

And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramplings up and down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows past;
Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him
White hands and courtesy. But when the prince
Three times had blown — after long hush — at last —
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed therein.
High on a night-black horse, in night-black arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter — some ten steps —
In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn — advanced
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly:
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling flowers
As if for pity?' But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher. A maiden swoon'd;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and Death;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;
And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neigh'd,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the terror saw
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, 'Knight,
Slay me not; my three brethren bade me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.
They never dream'd the passes would be past.'
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair child,
What madness made thee challenge the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bade me do it.
They hate the King and Lancelot, the King's friend;
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance
And revel and song, made merry over Death,
As being after all their foolish fears

And horrors only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he that told it later says Lynette.

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NOTE. The complete series of the Idylls, including *The Coming of Arthur* and *The Passing of Arthur*, comprises twelve poems. In this volume six of the series are omitted, the first omission being of four Idylls following *Gareth and Lynette* in the completed work. These omitted Idylls are by name (1) *The Marriage of Geraint*, (2) *Geraint and Enid*, (3) *Balin and Balan*, (4) *Merlin and Vivien*. The second omission follows the Idyll of *The Holy Grail*, the omitted Idylls being *Pelleas and Ettarre* and *The Last Tournament*.

The unity of the *Idylls of the King*, taken as a whole, is not so strictly maintained that a reading of the omitted Idylls is essential to an understanding of the story. It is true that we can find in a study of the whole series of the Idylls a progressive degeneration within Arthur's court, and that a careful treatment of the Idylls with a special effort to emphasize this element in the unity of the whole series can bring forth in each Idyll some character or incident that betrays the growing degeneration, but the true unity lies, not in the story of this degeneration, but in the character of Arthur. The reader can get the essential elements of the Idylls by a study of those separate poems included in this volume in which the influence of Arthur is predominant.

In connection with this question of the unity of the Idylls as a whole, the date of composition of the separate poems is noteworthy. The *Morte d'Arthur*, later incorporated into *The Passing of Arthur*, was written about 1835 and published in the 1842 volume. In 1859, seventeen years later, appeared the first instalment of the Idylls, including the following titles: *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*. After a lapse of ten years, in 1869 four new poems were added to those already published, namely, *The Coming of Arthur*, *The Holy Grail*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, and *The Passing of Arthur* (including as mentioned before the *Morte d'Arthur* of 1842). After another lapse, this time of three years, *The Last Tournament* and *Gareth and Lynette* appeared. And last of all, in 1885, *Balin and Balan* was included, appearing in a volume entitled *Tiresias and Other Poems*. This résumé of the dates of publication of the separate poems in the series is introduced here to show that the unity of the whole is dependent not upon a clearly defined plot worked out progressively from Idyll to Idyll, but upon the character, influence, ideals, and personality of Arthur.

Furthermore, those Idylls in which the influence of Arthur, whether he is represented throughout as being present in person or not, is clearly predominant, are the Idylls which contain the finest poetry of the whole series. No one will seriously assert that the *Enid* Idylls, or *Balin and Balan*, or *Pelleas and Ettarre* are, in plot or expression, the equals of *Gareth and Lynette*, *Lancelot and Elaine*, or the exquisitely pathetic *Guinevere*. In restricting the Idylls in this volume to those in which the influence of Arthur is predominant, we have therefore not only retained the material that is necessary for a conception of the truest unity of the series as a whole, but we have chosen also the finest of the separate Idylls for the reader.

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## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Before — or after — reading *Lancelot and Elaine*, the student should for comparison read *The Lady of Shalott* (p. 617 in this volume). *The Lady of Shalott*, which was published in 1832, is one of the earliest instances of Tennyson's interest in the Arthur legends and is founded on the same story which is the subject of *Lancelot and Elaine*.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh,
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle,

That at Caerleon — this at Camelot —
And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side;
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together, but their names were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a blow;
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd.
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into color with the crags.
And he that once was king had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn.
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights
Saying: 'These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's —
For public use. Henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these;
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder!' Thus he spoke.
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen
When all were won; but, meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake — for she had been sick — to Guinevere:
'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she said, 'ye know it.'
'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight ye love to look on.' And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He, thinking that he read her meaning there,
'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a heart

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen —
However much he yearn'd to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon —
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;' and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!"'
Then Lancelot, vext at having lied in vain:
'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer when ye loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men; many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty; and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?'

She broke into a little scornful laugh:
'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord —
But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me. Only here to-day
There gleamed a vague suspicion in his eyes;
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him — else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself; but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all.
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the color. I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts;
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
'And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honors his own word
As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,
'A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me; but listen to me,
If I must find you wit. We hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers. Hide it therefore; go unknown.
Win! by this kiss you will; and our true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself;
They prove to him his work. Win and return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter; mother of the house
There was not. Some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:
'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen; the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat: 'Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir Torre,
'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'
Here laugh'd the father saying: 'Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight,' said young Lavaine,
'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre,
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go;
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it —
But all was jest and joke among ourselves —
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight.
Win shall I not, but do my best to win;
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend;
And you shall win this diamond, — as I hear,
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'
'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir Torre,

'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.'
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased; the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it; but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind;
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he;
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O, there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.
O, tell us — for we live apart — you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald centred in a sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
"They are broken, they are broken!" for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
For if his own knight casts him down, he laughs,
Saying his knights are better men than he —
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him. I never saw his like; there lives
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature; and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep,
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating.
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
'This shield, my friend, where is it?' and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and, more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
'Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said he,
'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favor of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those who know me know.'
'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you.' And he turn'd
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd: 'True, my child.
Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to me.
What is it?' and she told him, 'A red sleeve
Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it. Then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, 'I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living,' and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
But left her all the paler when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
His brother's, which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:

'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'
She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your squire!'
Whereat Lavaine said laughing: 'Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color back;
Once, twice, and thrice. Now get you hence to bed;'
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away. She staid a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there —
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —
Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd,
And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
And cells and chambers. All were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away.
Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,'
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'
And after muttering, 'The great Lancelot,'
At last he got his breath and answer'd: 'One,
One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there — then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work;
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said:
'Me you call great; mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance; but there is many a youth

Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great.
There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger. Little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
Count, baron — whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, 'Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone —
The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we that know him know.'
'How then? who then?' a fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driven backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark
And him that helms it; so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully.
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with, — drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew
Proclaiming his the prize who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the knights,
His party, cried, 'Advance and take thy prize
The diamond;' but he answer'd: 'Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-head.'
'Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine,
'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'
But he, 'I die already with it; draw —

Draw,' — and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wild world's rumor by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'
'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day —
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —
He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied, needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given;
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honor; since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took
And gave the diamond. Then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Past, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
And ridden away to die?' So fear'd the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay, lord,' she said.
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the Queen amazed,
'Was he not with you? won he not your prize?'
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why, that like was he.'
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said: 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name

Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, even the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory."'

Then replied the King:
'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter; now remains
But little cause for laughter. His own kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field.
Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,
'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that, she choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shriek'd out 'Traitor!' to the unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touch'd at all points except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat;
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?'
'He won.'
'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side;' whereat she caught her breath.
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go.
Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she swoon'd.
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridden a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat: 'Bide with us,
And ride no more at random, noble prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for. Furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear.' To this the courteous prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And staid; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine;
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect — again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd.

'Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!'
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and low smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him: 'Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went
To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,' said he,
'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the shield.'
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd:
'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!'
'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily, 'I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all.'
'And if *I* dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!
Speak therefore; shall I waste myself in vain?'
Full simple was her answer: 'What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,
Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself —
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love.'
'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all others know,
And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away;
But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve.
Would he break faith with one I may not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
Nay — like enow. Why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also — here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times! — a thousand times farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter! there, I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is the knight.'
And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I learnt,
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region; but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore. She loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,

I gave the diamond. She will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:
'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared;
Till even the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said:
'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?'
'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let me hence,'
She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'
'Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine.
Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,
'And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for the lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens. Let me hence,
I pray you.' Then her father nodding said:
'Ay, ay, the diamond. Wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest. Yea, and you must give it —
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's —
Nay, I mean nothing; so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,

'Being so very wilful you must go,'
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
'Being so very wilful you must die.'
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
'What matter, so I help him back to life?'
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers;
Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she cried, 'Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He amazed,
'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?'
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves. There first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall; her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
'Your prize the diamond sent you by the King.'
His eyes glisten'd; she fancied, 'Is it for me?'
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.
At once she slipt like water to the floor.
'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied you.
Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,' she said;
'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colors on her simple face;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
And being weak in body said no more,
But did not love the color; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night, but woke with dawn, and past
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave. So day by day she past
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night; and Lancelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times

Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he. But the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not live;
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain! it cannot be.
He will not love me. How then? must I die?'
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, 'Must I die?'
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd, 'death or him,'
Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,
'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers: 'and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have ye done me that I make
My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can.'
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I go to-day.' Then out she brake:
'Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word.'
'Speak; that I live to hear,' he said, 'is yours.'
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:

'I have gone mad. I love you; let me die.'
'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'
And innocently extending her white arms,
'Your love,' she said, 'your love — to be your wife.'
And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;
But now there never will be wife of mine.'
'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'
And Lancelot answer'd: 'Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation — nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness.' And she said,
'Not to be with you, not to see your face —
Alas for me then, my good days are done!'
'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!
This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,
Most common; yea, I know it of mine own self,
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy; furthermore,
Even to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied,
'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father: 'Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,
'That were against me; what I can I will;'
And there that day remain'd, and toward even
Sent for his shield. Full meekly rose the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat.
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to thee,
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song 'The Song of Love and Death,'
And sang it; sweetly could she make and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain.
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be.
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away;
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay;
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death,' and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said: 'Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it; there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, "Now shall I have my will;"
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one.
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!'

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?'

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say:
'I never loved him; an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down.
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house.'

To whom the gentle sister made reply:
'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest.'

'Highest?' the father answer'd, echoing 'highest?'—
He meant to break the passion in her — 'nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame,
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
'Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger. These are slanders; never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain; so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return.
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire,
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd,
'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;' she replied,
'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not,' she said — 'ye never yet
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,
My latest. Lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat has gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me; he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased. Her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her,

'Sister, farewell forever,' and again,
'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood —
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds; for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd: 'Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's. These are words;
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O, grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon; but, my Queen,
I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumors be.
When did not rumors fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you; have your joys apart.
I doubt not that, however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful; and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule,
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;

Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O, as much fairer — as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds — hers not mine —
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will —
She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd,
'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said:
'He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairyland?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights. Then turn'd the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her;
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips
Who had devised the letter moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love.
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature; what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen —
Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm:
'Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death.'
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding: 'Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down,
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her — then would I,
More specially were he she wedded poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance. More than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd: 'O my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them: 'Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!' which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love.'
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
'That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven.'
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affection said:

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long practised knight
And let the younger and unskill'd go by
To win his honor and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot: 'Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart —
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said the King.
'Let love be free; free love is for the best.
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself: 'Ah, simple heart and sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at last —
Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love?"
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
Caught from his mother's arms — the wondrous one
Who passes thro' the vision of the night —
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son," and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it.
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me; but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me. Not without
She wills it — would I, if she will'd it? nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

## THE HOLY GRAIL

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd the Pure,
Had past into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
And honor'd him, and wrought into his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came; and as they sat

Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years;
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale. But thee,
When first thou camest — such a courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice — I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King; and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such passion mine.
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women watch
Who wins, who falls, and waste the spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy Grail! — I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here too much
We moulder — as to things without I mean —
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said. What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answer'd Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat —
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven, and disappear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
And heal the world of all their wickedness!
"O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay," said he,
"I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness!
And "O my brother Percivale," she said,
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail;
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight.' And the slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me — O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.
"God make thee good as thou art beautiful!"
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight, and none
In so young youth was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment — chatterers they,
Like birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies — we know not whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long

A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
Saying: "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city;" and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle. O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it "the Siege Perilous,"
Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,
"No man could sit but he should lose himself."
And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day;
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it past.
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,
'What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, 'the King,
Was not in hall; for early that same day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit bold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help; for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of brambie, and all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest. So the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there! the roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke!
Pray heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt!"
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

'O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall;
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, "We have still a king."

'And, brother, had you known our hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank; and who shall blazon it? when and how? —
O, there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast away!

'So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all;
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms
Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke and sear'd,
Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest; and then the King
Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale,"—
Because the hall was all in tumult — some
Vowing, and some protesting, — "what is this?"

'O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
My sister's vision and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights," he cried,
"Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow."
Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn." "Yea, yea," said he,
"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?"

'"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
But since I did not see the holy thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows."

'"Lo, now," said Arthur, "have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me!'"'

'"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such
As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
A sign to maim this Order which I made.
But ye that follow but the leader's bell,"—
Brother, the King was hard upon his knights, —
"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,
And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,
What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor Percivales" —
For thus it pleased the King to range me close
After Sir Galahad; — "nay," said he, "but men
With strength and will to right the wrong'd, of power
To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood —
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made.
Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm
Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires
Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,
Return no more. Ye think I show myself
Too dark a prophet. Come now, let us meet
The morrow morn once more in one full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,
Before ye leave him for this quest, may count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from underground,
All the great Table of our Arthur closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,
So many lances broken — never yet
Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur came;
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!"

'But when the next day brake from underground —
O brother, had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old
The King himself had fears that it would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by name,
Calling "God speed!" but in the ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor
Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,
"This madness has come on us for our sins."
So to the Gate of the Three Queens we came,

Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
And thence departed every one his way.

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
So many and famous names; and never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, "This quest is not for thee."
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, "This quest is not for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the quest;"
But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field
The plowman left his plowing and fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail
The milkmaid left her milking and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armor with a crown of gold
About a casque all jewels, and his horse
In golden armor jewelled everywhere;
And on the splendor came, flashing me blind,
And seem'd to me the lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top a city wall'd; the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!"
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past

Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
"Where is that goodly company," said I,
"That so cried out upon me?" and he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
"Whence and what art thou?" and even as he spoke
Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more and cried in grief,
"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust!"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

'"O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is thine,'
And all her form shone forth with sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and she
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east.
But her thou hast not known; for what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad." When the hermit made an end,
In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,
And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine.
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
This holy thing, fail'd from my side, nor come
Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,
And hence I go, and one will crown me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

'While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed.
Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

'There rose a hill that none but man could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-courses —
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it, storm
Round us and death; for every moment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd, so quick and thick
The lightnings here and there to left and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fire. And at the base we found
On either hand, as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of men,
Not to be crost, save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd
To follow; and thrice above him all the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such as seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God. And first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were — I saw not whence it came.
And when the heavens open'd and blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl —
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep,
And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd
The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy man,
Glad that no phantom vext me more, return'd
To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius, — 'for in sooth
These ancient books — and they would win thee — teem,
Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
Who read but on my breviary with ease,
Till my head swims, and then go forth and pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
To these old walls — and mingle with our folk;
And knowing every honest face of theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
And every homely secret in their hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
That have no meaning half a league away;
Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs —
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:
'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
And women were as phantoms. O, my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
And meagre, and the vision had not come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of it.

Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower;
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
A slender page about her father's hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing, yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me, for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and tongue:
"We have heard of thee; thou art our greatest knight,
Our Lady says it, and we well believe.
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,
And even the holy quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her nor anything upon earth.'

Then said the monk: 'Poor men, when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
My cold heart with a friend; but O the pity
To find thine own first love once more — to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed!
For we that want the warmth of double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,
With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,
None of your knights?'

'Yea, so,' said Percivale:
'One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon,
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he me,
And each made joy of either. Then he ask'd:
"Where is he? hast thou seen him — Lancelot? — Once,"
Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me — mad,
And maddening what he rode; and when I cried,
'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
So holy?' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way!'
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him
That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors
Beyond the rest. He well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,

Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the holy quest.
If God would send the vision, well; if not,
The quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven; and their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which can trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him
And this high quest as at a simple thing,
Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's words —
A mocking fire: "what other fire than he
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"
And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there
In darkness thro' innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle — what else? —
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,
Such as no wind could move; and thro' the gap
Glimmer'd the streaming scud. Then came a night
Still as the day was loud, and thro' the gap
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round —
For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
In on him shone: "And then to me, to me,"
Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself —
Across the seven clear stars — O grace to me! —
In color like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I remember now
That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board,
And mighty reverent at our grace was he;
A square-set man and honest, and his eyes,
An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,
Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd
The city, found ye all your knights return'd,
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And that can I,
Brother, and truly; since the living words
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
Pass not from door to door and out again,
But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the stones
Raw that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
And those that had gone out upon the quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,

And those that had not, stood before the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose and bade me hail,
Saying: "A welfare in thine eyes reproves
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee
On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
Among the strange devices of our kings,
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded for us
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now — the quest,
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy Cup
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this quest for thee?"

'"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for such as I.
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
Who made me sure the quest was not for me;
For I was much a-wearied of the quest,
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to him,
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;" and Bors,
"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it;
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm.
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King, "my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd for thee?"

'"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot, with a groan;
"O King!" — and when he paused methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes —
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
Slime of the ditch; but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy knights
Sware, I sware with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept and said
That, save they could be pluck'd asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom I vow'd
That I would work according as he will'd
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away.
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began to blow,

So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
'I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker! There was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs,
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence
The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.
And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,
No bench nor table, painting on the wall
Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower
To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand steps
With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to climb
For ever; at the last I reach'd a door,
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
'Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!'
Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away —
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes!
And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left
The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words, —
A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King, —
Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,
"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.
But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward."

'"Deafer," said the blameless King,
"Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their sight
For every fiery prophet in old times,

And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

'"Nay— but thou errest, Lancelot; never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness but apart there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

'"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?— lost to me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order— scarce return'd a tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw.
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And, leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him other where.

'"And some among you held that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow.
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done, but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision— yea, his very hand and foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again. Ye have seen what ye have seen."

'So spake the King; I knew not all he meant.'

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NOTE. — After *The Holy Grail*, two Idylls are omitted, *Pelleas and Ettarre* and *The Last Tournament* (see note, p. 699).

The last stanza of *The Last Tournament* is a fitting introduction to the pathos of *Guinevere*: —

> That night came Arthur home, and while he climbed,
> All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom,
> The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw
> The great Queen's bower was dark, — about his feet
> A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,
> 'What art thou?' and the voice about his feet
> Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy fool,
> And I shall never make thee smile again.'

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## GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice. One low light betwixt them burn'd.
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance. For this
He chill'd the popular praises of the King
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,
Had been — their wont — a-maying and return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best
Enid and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wiliest and the worst; and more than this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by
Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,
So from the high wall and the flowering grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way;
But when he knew the prince tho' marr'd with dust,
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
Made such excuses as he might, and these
Full knightly without scorn. For in those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn;
But, if a man were halt, or hunch'd, in him
By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,
And he was answer'd softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot holp
To raise the prince, who rising twice or thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went;
But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries,
'I shudder, some one steps across my grave;'
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and hers
Would be for evermore a name of scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye.
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls —
Held her awake; or if she slept she dream'd
An awful dream, for then she seem'd to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it till it touch'd her, and she turn'd —

When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but grew,
Till even the clear face of the guileless King,
And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane; and at the last she said:
'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze
Before the people and our lord the King.'
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
And still they met and met. Again she said,
'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence.'
And then they were agreed upon a night —
When the good King should not be there — to meet
And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.
She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they met
And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye,
Low on the border of her couch they sat
Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought
His creatures to the basement of the tower
For testimony; and crying with full voice,
'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,' aroused
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off,
And all was still. Then she, 'The end is come,
And I am shamed for ever;' and he said:
'Mine be the shame, mine was the sin; but rise,
And fly to my strong castle over-seas.
There will I hide thee till my life shall end,
There hold thee with my life against the world.'
She answer'd: 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.
Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself!
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou
Unwedded; yet rise now, and let us fly,
For I will draw me into sanctuary,
And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her horse,
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
And then they rode to the divided way,
There kiss'd, and parted weeping; for he past,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,
And heard the spirits of the waste and weald
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan.
And in herself she moan'd, 'Too late, too late!'
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,
A blot in heaven, the raven, flying high,
Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a field of death;
For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,
Begin to slay the folk and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she spake
There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine enemies
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
Her name to whom ye yield it till her time
To tell you;' and her beauty, grace, and power
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns,
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,
But communed only with the little maid,

Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness
Which often lured her from herself; but now,
This night, a rumor wildly blown about
Came that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm
And leagued him with the heathen, while the King
Was waging war on Lancelot. Then she thought,
'With what a hate the people and the King
Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon her hands
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd
No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so late!
What hour, I wonder now?' and when she drew
No answer, by and by began to hum
An air the nuns had taught her: 'Late, so late!'
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said,
'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep.'
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we; for that we do repent,
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light! so late! and dark and chill the night!
O, let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passionately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.
Then said the little novice prattling to her:

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words — the words of one so small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
And if I do not there is penance given —
Comfort your sorrows, for they do not flow
From evil done; right sure am I of that,
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,
And weighing find them less; for gone is he
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;
And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
The traitor — Ah, sweet lady, the King's grief
For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours!
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great;
For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have done;
None knows it, and my tears have brought me good.
But even were the griefs of little ones
As great as those of great ones, yet this grief
Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
That, howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud;
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked Queen,
And were I such a King with such a Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a King it could not be.'

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,
'Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?'
But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this all is woman's grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life

Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders, there
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
'Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?'
But openly she spake and said to her,
'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garrulously:
'Yea, but I know; the land was full of signs
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So said my father, and himself was knight
Of the great Table — at the founding of it,
And rode thereto from Lyonnesse; and he said
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,
All down the lonely coast of Lyonnesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet, saw
He saw them — headland after headland flame
Far on into the rich heart of the west.
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father — yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,
That shook beneath them as the thistle shakes
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed.
And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke
Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;
And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dream'd; for every knight
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
While the wine ran; so glad were spirits and men
Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,
'Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,
Spirits and men. Could none of them foresee,
Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders, what has fallen upon the realm?'

To whom the novice garrulously again:
'Yea, one, a bard, of whom my father said,
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave;
And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,
When round him bent the spirits of the hills
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame.
So said my father — and that night the bard
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King
As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at those
Who call'd him the false son of Gorloïs.

For there was no man knew from whence
he came;
But after tempest, when the long wave
broke
All down the thundering shores of Bude
and Bos,
There came a day as still as heaven, and
then
They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea,
And that was Arthur, and they foster'd
him
Till he by miracle was approven King;
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth; and could he
find
A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
The twain together well might change the
world.
But even in the middle of his song
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the
harp,
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would
have fallen,
But that they stay'd him up; nor would he
tell
His vision; but what doubt that he fore-
saw
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?'

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they have
set her on,
Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,
To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor
spake.
Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd
hands,
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check her gad-
ding tongue
Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
Which my good father told me, check me
too
Nor let me shame my father's memory,
one
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would
say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers
back,
And left me; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for courtesy —
And pray you check me if I ask amiss —
But pray you, which had noblest, while
you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the
King?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and an-
swer'd her:
'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and the King
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and these
two
Were the most nobly-manner'd men of
all;
For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such
fair fruit?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-
fold
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the
Queen:
'O, closed about by narrowing nunnery-
walls,
What knowest thou of the world and all its
lights
And shadows, all the wealth and all the
woe?
If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he scape the doom of
fire,
And weep for her who drew him to his
doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for
both;
But I should all as soon believe that his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would
be
Such as they are, were you the sinful
Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where
she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat

Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried:
'Such as thou art be never maiden more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
And play upon and harry me, petty spy
And traitress!' When that storm of anger brake
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen
As tremulously as foam upon the beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
And when the Queen had added, 'Get thee hence!'
Fled frighted. Then that other left alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
Saying in herself: 'The simple, fearful child
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, Heaven, for surely I repent!
For what is true repentance but in thought —
Not even in inmost thought to think again
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us?
And I have sworn never to see him more,
To see him more.'

And even in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the mind
Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,
Ambassador, to yield her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, — for the time
Was may-time, and as yet no sin was dream'd, —
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreaking thro' the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,
Came to that point where first she saw the King
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,
High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,
'Not like my Lancelot' — while she brooded thus
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,
Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King!' She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet
Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,
And grovell'd with her face against the floor.
There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from the King,
And in the darkness heard his armed feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but, tho' changed, the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?
Well is it that no child is born of thee.
The children born of thee are sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea;
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,
Have everywhere about this land of Christ
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.
And knowest thou now from whence I come — from him,
From waging bitter war with him; and he,
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
He spared to lift his hand against the King
Who made him knight. But many a knight was slain;
And many more and all his kith and kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
And many more when Modred raised revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
And of this remnant will I leave a part,
True men who love me still, for whom I live,
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.
Fear not; thou shalt be guarded till my death.
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.
Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
That I the King should greatly care to live;
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.
Bear with me for the last time while I show,
Even for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.
For when the Roman left us, and their law
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.
But I was first of all the kings who drew
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all
The realms together under me, their Head,
In that fair Order of my Table Round,
A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honor his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
And all this throve before I wedded thee,
Believing, "Lo, mine helpmate, one to feel
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy!"
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;
Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;
Then others, following these my mightiest knights,
And drawing foul ensample from fair names,
Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,
Not greatly care to lose; but rather think
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,
To sit once more within his lonely hall,
And miss the wonted number of my knights,
And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
As in the golden days before thy sin.
For which of us who might be left could speak
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,
And I should evermore be vext with thee
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
I am not made of so slight elements.
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who either for his own or children's sake,

To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
Whom he knows false abide and rule the house:
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!
Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
The mockery of my people and their bane!'

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes;
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming death, —
When first I learnt thee hidden here, — is past.
The pang — which, while I weigh'd thy heart with one
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
Made my tears burn — is also past — in part.
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives! do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's; nay, they never were the King's.
I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,
"I loathe thee;" yet not less, O Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
So far that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow.
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the west,
Where I must strike against the man they call
My sister's son — no kin of mine, who leagues
With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet myself
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;
But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more —
Farewell!'

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found
The casement: 'peradventure,' so she thought,
'If I might see his face, and not be seen.'
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
And near him the sad nuns with each a light
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,
To which for crest the golden dragon clung
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
And even then he turn'd; and more and more
The moony vapor rolling round the King,
Who seem'd the phantom of a giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud,
'O Arthur!' there her voice brake suddenly,
Then — as a stream that spouting from a cliff
Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale —
Went on in passionate utterance:

'Gone — my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answer'd his farewell.
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution. He, the King,
Call'd me polluted. Shall I kill myself?
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul, nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and make the years,
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be; that is but of the world —
What else? what hope? I think there was a hope,
Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope;
His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
My wickedness to him, and left me hope
That in mine own heart I can live down sin
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God! Ah great and gentle lord,
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights —
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up, or half-despised the height
To which I would not or I could not climb —
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air,
That pure severity of perfect light —
I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found
In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,
Thou art the highest and most human too,
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?
Now — ere he goes to the great battle? none!
Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known;

It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the highest when we see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand
Grasp'd made her vail her eyes. She look'd and saw
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,
'Yea, little maid, for am *I* not forgiven?'
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed
Within her, and she wept with these and said:

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying, "Shame!"
I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;
Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,
But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;
Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own;
And so wear out in alms-deed and in prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.'

She said. They took her to themselves; and she
Still hoping, fearing 'Is it yet too late?'
Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess, lived
For three brief years, and there, an abbess, past
To where beyond these voices there is peace.

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

'I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is —
Perchance, because we see not to the close; —
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain,
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death!
Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling: 'Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!'
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd:
'Who spake? A dream. O, light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
'O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
For ever; but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise —
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move than when we strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Thro' this blind haze which, ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonnesse —
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,

Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and even on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or death-like swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the north, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle. But no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me? —
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king;
Behold, I seem but king among the dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: 'My King!
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as king.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who sware my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me king.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for king.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the King

Made at the man. Then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more — but let what will be be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou remember-est how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-ful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-ping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-bur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-vere:
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying: "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
'Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —
And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon!

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge.'
So to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parch'd with dust,
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King is gone.'
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
'From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag,
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried:
'He passes to be king among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but — if he come no more —
O me, be yon dark queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

## TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee —
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the Prince
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life again
From halfway down the shadow of the grave
Past with thee thro' thy people and their love,
And London roll'd one tide of joy thro' all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of man
And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed, and clime —
Thunderless lightnings striking under sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,
And that true North, whereof we lately heard
A strain to shame us, 'Keep you to yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends — your love
Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and go.'
Is this the tone of empire? here the faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning whom the roar of Hougoumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she should speak
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier — hour by hour!
The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas?
*There* rang her voice, when the full city peal'd
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their crown
Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes
For ever-broadening England, and her throne
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness; if she knows
And dreads it we are fallen. — But thou, my Queen,
Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul,
Ideal manhood closed in real man,

Rather than that gray king whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
That hover'd between war and wantonness,
And crownings and dethronements. Take withal
Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that Heaven
Will blow the tempest in the distance back
From thine and ours; for some are scared, who mark,
Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
Waverings of every vane with every wind,
And wordy trucklings to the transient hour,
And fierce or careless looseners of the faith,
And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,
Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,
Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,
Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from France,
And that which knows, but careful for itself,
And that which knows not, ruling that which knows
To its own harm. The goal of this great world
Lies beyond sight; yet — if our slowly-grown
And crown'd Republic's crowning common sense,
That saved her many times, not fail — their fears
Are morning shadows huger than the shapes

That cast them, not those gloomier which forego
The darkness of that battle in the west
Where all of high and holy dies away.

## CROSSING THE BAR

[Publ. 1889]

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar.
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

# ROBERT BROWNING

## PIPPA PASSES

A DRAMA

[Publ. 1841]

PERSONS

PIPPA.
OTTIMA.
SEBALD.
Foreign Students.
GOTTLIEB.
SCHRAMM.
JULES.
PHENE.
Austrian Police.
BLUPHOCKS.
LUIGI and his mother.
POOR GIRLS.
MONSIGNOR and his attendants.

### INTRODUCTION

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN

*A large mean airy chamber. A girl,* PIPPA, *from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last:
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

Oh Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances,
(Be they grants thou art bound to or gifts above measure)
One of thy choices or one of thy chances,
(Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy pleasure)
— My Day, if I squander such labor or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good —
Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
As if earth turned from work in gamesome mood —
All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not
As prosperous ones are treated, those who live
At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou refusest;
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa, — old-year's sorrow,
Cast off last night, will come again tomorrow:
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.
All other men and women that this earth
Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
Get more joy one way, if another, less:
Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven
What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven, —
Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!
Try now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones —
And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain

Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?
And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom
O'er Jules and Phene, — what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? 'T is their marriage-day;
And while they leave church and go home their way,
Hand clasping hand, within each breast would be
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee.
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
With mist, — will Luigi and his mother grieve —
The lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose,
Receives them. And yet once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make
Such stir about, — whom they expect from Rome
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
And say here masses proper to release
A soul from pain, — what storm dares hurt his peace?
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard.
But Pippa — just one such mischance would spoil
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!
And here I let time slip for naught!
Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught
With a single splash from my ewer!
You that would mock the best pursuer,
Was my basin over-deep?
One splash of water ruins you asleep,
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counterwheeling,
Reeling, broken beyond healing:
Now grow together on the ceiling!
That will task your wits.

Whoever it was quenched fire first, hoped to see
Morsel after morsel flee
As merrily, as giddily . . .
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?
Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?
New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,
Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll!
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bud there, — fairies watch unroll
Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame through that dusk-green universe!
I am queen of thee, floweret!
And each fleshy blossom
Preserve I not — (safer
Than leaves that embower it,
Or shells that embosom)
— From weevil and chafer?
Laugh through my pane then; solicit the bee;
Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,
Love thy queen, worship me!

— Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,
Whate'er I please? What shall I please to-day?
My morn, noon, eve and night — how spend my day?
To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk:
But, this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy's fullest games
I may fancy all day — and it shall be so —
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the hillside yonder, through the morning,
Some one shall love me, as the world calls love:
I am no less than Ottima, take warning!
The gardens, and the great stone house above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,

Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,
To court me, while old Luca yet reposes:
And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,
I . . . what now? — give abundant cause for prate
About me — Ottima, I mean — of late,
Too bold, too confident she 'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town.
How we talk in the little town below!
But love, love, love — there 's better love, I know!
This foolish love was only day's first offer;
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer:
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley:
Why should not I be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride —
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,
Blacker than all except the black eyelash;
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses!
— So strict was she, the veil
Should cover close her pale
Pure cheeks — a bride to look at and scarce touch,
Scarce touch, remember, Jules! For are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?
A soft and easy life these ladies lead:
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed.
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh, no — not envy, this!

— Not envy, sure! — for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I 'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning;
As little fear of losing it as winning:
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives.
At eve the Son and Mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our turret: what prevents
My being Luigi? While that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird —
(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends)
— Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;
Let me be Luigi! If I only knew
What was my mother's face — my father, too!
Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love befall
Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
Monsignor? — who to-night will bless the home
Of his dead brother; and God bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn
With love for all men! I, to-night at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait! — even I already seem to share
In God's love: what does New-year's hymn declare?
What other meaning do these verses bear?

*All service ranks the same with God:*
*If now, as formerly he trod*
*Paradise, his presence fills*
*Our earth, each only as God wills*
*Can work — God's puppets, best and worst,*
*Are we; there is no last nor first.*

*Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?*
*Costs it more pain that this, ye call*
*A "great event," should come to pass,*
*Than that? Untwine me from the mass*
*Of deeds which make up life, one deed*
*Power shall fall short in or exceed!*

And more of it, and more of it! — oh yes —
I will pass each, and see their happiness,

And envy none — being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday!
But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?
— With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,
Down the grass path gray with dew,
Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
Where the swallow never flew
Nor yet cicala dared carouse —
No, dared carouse! [*She enters the street.*

## I. MORNING

*Up the Hillside, inside the Shrub-house.* LUCA'S *Wife* OTTIMA, *and her Paramour, the German* SEBALD.

*Sebald.* [*sings.*] *Let the watching lids wink!*
*Day's ablaze with eyes, think!*
*Deep into the night, drink!*

*Ottima.* Night? Such may be your Rhineland nights, perhaps;
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink
— We call such light, the morning: let us see!
Mind how you grope your way, though! How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice
Behind that frame! — Nay, do I bid you? — Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course
The slide-bolt catches. Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is 't full morning?
Oh, don't speak then!
*Seb.* Ay, thus it used to be!
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till mid-day; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings through the vale here; country girls
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills:
But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye!
And wisely: you were plotting one thing there,
Nature, another outside. I looked up —
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light.
Oh, I remember! — and the peasants laughed
And said, "The old man sleeps with the young wife."
This house was his, this chair, this window — his.
*Otti.* Ah, the clear morning! I can see Saint Mark's;
That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza
Should lie . . . there 's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger!
*Seb.* Morning?
It seems to me a night with a sun added.
Where 's dew, where 's freshness? That bruised plant, I bruised
In getting through the lattice yestereve,
Droops as it did. See, here 's my elbow's mark
I' the dust o' the sill.
*Otti.* Oh, shut the lattice, pray!
*Seb.* Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
Foul as the morn may be.
There, shut the world out!
How do you feel now, Ottima? There, curse
The world and all outside! Let us throw off
This mask: how do you bear yourself? Let 's out
With all of it!
*Otti.* Best never speak of it.
*Seb.* Best speak again and yet again of it,
Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
For instance — let those two words mean, "His blood"
And nothing more. Notice, I 'll say them now,
"His blood."
*Otti.* Assuredly if I repented
The deed —
*Seb.* Repent? Who should repent, or why?
What puts that in your head? Did I once say
That I repented?
*Otti.* No; I said the deed . . .
*Seb.* "The deed" and "the event" — just now it was
"Our passion's fruit" — the devil take such cant!

Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cut-throat, you are . . .
*Otti.* Here 's the wine;
I brought it when we left the house above,
And glasses too — wine of both sorts.
Black? White then?
*Seb.* But am not I his cut-throat? What are you?
*Otti.* There trudges on his business from the Duomo
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet; always in one place at church,
Close under the stone wall by the south entry.
I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass — at first, I say, I used:
Now, so has that dumb figure fastened on me,
I rather should account the plastered wall
A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
This, Sebald?
*Seb.* No, the white wine — the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way;
Nor does it rise. Pour on! To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?
*Otti.* You brought those foreign prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up
To hunt them out.
*Seb.* 'Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face.
*Otti.* Do you
Fondle me then! Who means to take your life
For that, my Sebald?
*Seb.* Hark you, Ottima!
One thing to guard against. We 'll not make much
One of the other — that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday: as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof were needed now, now first,
To show I love you — yes, still love you — love you
In spite of Luca and what 's come to him
— Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all!
We 'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other, were not tied
By this: conceive you?
*Otti.* Love!
*Seb.* Not tied so sure!
Because though I was wrought upon, have struck
His insolence back into him — am I
So surely yours? — therefore forever yours?
*Otti.* Love, to be wise, (one counsel pays another,)
Should we have — months ago, when first we loved,
For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores —
If we had come upon a thing like that
Suddenly . . .
*Seb.* "A thing" — there again — "a thing!"
*Otti.* Then, Venus' body, had we come upon
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close —
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist
In poring now upon it? For 't is here
As much as there in the deserted house:
You cannot rid your eyes of it. For me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse: I hate . . .
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold
His two dead hands, and say, "I hate you worse,
Luca, than" . . .
*Seb.* Off, off — take your hands off mine,
'T is the hot evening — off! oh, morning is it?
*Otti.* There 's one thing must be done; you know what thing.
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep
Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.
*Seb.* What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him! He is turned by this
Off from his face beside, as you will see.
*Otti.* This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.

Three, four — four gray hairs! Is it so you said
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No — this way.
*Seb.* Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
That this were undone! Killing! Kill the world,
So Luca lives again! — ay, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you — yes, and feign
Surprise that I return at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here —
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.
I would . . .
*Otti.* See!
*Seb.* No, I 'll finish. Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of, is, at bottom, fine
To suffer; there 's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate:
What is one young for, else? In age, we 'll sigh
O'er the wild reckless wicked days flown over;
Still, we have lived: the vice was in its place.
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse —
Do lovers in romances sin that way?
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music, starving while you plucked me
These flowers to smell!
*Otti.* My poor lost friend!
*Seb.* He gave me
Life, nothing less: what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more —
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?
He sat by us at table quietly:
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touched?
Could he do less than make pretence to strike?
'T is not the crime's sake — I 'd commit ten crimes
Greater, to have this crime wiped out, undone!
And you — O how feel you? Feel you for me?
*Otti.* Well then, I love you better now than ever,
And best (look at me while I speak to you) —
Best for the crime; nor do I grieve, in truth,
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,
Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours
May not now be looked over: look it down!
Great? let it be great; but the joys it brought,
Pay they or no its price? Come: they or it!
Speak not! The past, would you give up the past
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you?
The garden's silence: even the single bee
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula chalice set a-swing.
Who stammered — "Yes, I love you?"
*Seb.* And I drew
Back; put far back your face with both my hands
Lest you should grow too full of me — your face
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body!
*Otti.* And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings —
*Seb.* When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
To a yellow haze?
*Otti.* Ah — my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipped by the first frost.
*Seb.* You would always laugh
At my wet boots: I had to stride through grass
Over my ankles.
*Otti.* Then our crowning night!
*Seb.* The July night?
*Otti.* The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy suffered descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.
*Seb.* How it came!
*Otti.* Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;

Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned through the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,
As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me: then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead —
*Seb.* Yes!
*Otti.* — While I stretched myself upon you, hands
To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook
All my locks loose, and covered you with them —
You, Sebald, the same you!
*Seb.* Slower, Ottima!
*Otti.* And as we lay —
*Seb.* Less vehemently! Love me!
Forgive me! Take not words, mere words to heart!
Your breath is worse than wine. Breathe slow, speak slow!
Do not lean on me!
*Otti.* Sebald, as we lay,
Rising and falling only with our pants,
Who said, "Let death come now! 'T is right to die!
Right to be punished! Naught completes such bliss
But woe!" Who said that?
*Seb.* How did we ever rise?
Was 't that we slept? Why did it end?
*Otti.* I felt you
Taper into a point the ruffled ends
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips.
My hair is fallen now: knot it again!
*Seb.* I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now and now!
This way? Will you forgive me — be once more
My great queen?
*Otti.* Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!
*Seb.* I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent . . .

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA *singing* —

*The year 's at the spring*
*And the day 's at the morn;*
*Morning 's at seven;*
*The hillside 's dew-pearled;*
*The lark 's on the wing;*
*The snail 's on the thorn:*
*God 's in his heaven —*
*All 's right with the world!*

[PIPPA *passes.*

*Seb.* God 's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who spoke?
You, you spoke!
*Otti.* Oh — that little ragged girl!
She must have rested on the step: we give them
But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills — their inside?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stoops to pick my double heartsease . . . Sh!
She does not hear: call you out louder!
*Seb.* Leave me!
Go, get your clothes on — dress those shoulders!
*Otti.* Sebald?
*Seb.* Wipe off that paint! I hate you.
*Otti.* Miserable!
*Seb.* My God, and she is emptied of it now!
Outright now! — how miraculously gone
All of the grace — had she not strange grace once?
Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,
No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places: and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it,
Drops, a dead web!
*Otti.* Speak to me — not of me!
*Seb.* — That round great full-orbed face, where not an angle
Broke the delicious indolence — all broken!
*Otti.* To me — not of me! Ungrateful, perjured cheat!
A coward too: but ingrate 's worse than all!
Beggar — my slave — a fawning, cringing lie!
Leave me! Betray me! I can see your drift!
A lie that walks and eats and drinks!
*Seb.* My God!
Those morbid olive faultless shoulder-blades —

I should have known there was no blood beneath!

*Otti.* You hate me then? You hate me then?

*Seb.* To think
She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior — guilt from its excess superior
To innocence! That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick! I see what I have done,
Entirely now! Oh I am proud to feel
Such torments — let the world take credit thence —
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!
I hate, hate — curse you! God 's in his heaven!

*Otti.* — Me!

Me! no, no, Sebald, not yourself — kill me!
Mine is the whole crime. Do but kill me — then
Yourself — then — presently — first hear me speak!
I always meant to kill myself — wait, you!
Lean on my breast — not as a breast; don't love me
The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald! There, there, both deaths presently!

*Seb.* My brain is drowned now — quite drowned: all I feel
Is . . . is, at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurry-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit:
There they go — whirls from a black fiery sea!

*Otti.* Not me — to him, O God, be merciful!

PIPPA'S *Chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in his tomb,
While winter away;
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
How fare they?
Ha, ha, thanks for your counsel, my Zanze!
"Feast upon lampreys, quaff Breganze"—
The summer of life so easy to spend,
And care for to-morrow so soon put away!
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
How fare they?
No bidding me then to . . . what did Zanze say?
"Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
More like" . . . (what said she?) — "and less like canoes!"
How pert that girl was! — would I be those pert
Impudent staring women! It had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me:
No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect
Our silk-mills — none with blue eyes and thick rings
Of raw-silk-colored hair, at all events.
Well, if old Luca keep his good intents,
We shall do better, see what next year brings!
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
More destitute than you perhaps next year!
Bluph . . . something! I had caught the uncouth name
But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
Above us — bound to spoil such idle chatter
As ours: it were indeed a serious matter
If silly talk like ours should put to shame
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The . . . ah but — ah but, all the same,
No mere mortal has a right
To carry that exalted air;
Best people are not angels quite:
While — not the worst of people's doings scare
The devil; so there 's that proud look to spare!
Which is mere counsel to myself, mind! for
I have just been the holy Monsignor:
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,
And you too, Luigi! — how that Luigi started
Out of the turret — doubtlessly departed
On some good errand or another,
For he passed just now in a traveller's trim,
And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled
As if they had lost a prey in him.
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I? — tired of fooling.

Day for folly, night for schooling!
New year's day is over and spent,
Ill or well, I must be content.
Even my lily 's asleep, I vow:
Wake up — here 's a friend I 've plucked you!
Call this flower a heart's-ease now!
Something rare, let me instruct you,
Is this, with petals triply swollen,
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen;
While the leaves and parts that witness
Old proportions and their fitness,
Here remain unchanged, unmoved now;
Call this pampered thing improved now!
Suppose there 's a king of the flowers
And a girl-show held in his bowers —
"Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,
I have made her gorge polenta
Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
As her . . . name there 's no pronouncing!
See this heightened color too,
For she swilled Breganze wine
Till her nose turned deep carmine;
'T was but white when wild she grew.
And only by this Zanze's eyes
Of which we could not change the size,
The magnitude of all achieved
Otherwise, may be perceived."

Oh what a drear dark close to my poor day!
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud?
Ah Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
Dispensed with, never more to be allowed!
Day's turn is over, now arrives the night's.
Oh lark, be day's apostle
To mavis, merle and throstle,
Bid them their betters jostle
From day and its delights!
But at night, brother owlet, over the woods,
Toll the world to thy chantry;
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
Full complines with gallantry:
Then, owls and bats,
Cowls and twats,
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!
[*After she has began to undress herself.*
Now, one thing I should like to really know:
How near I ever might approach all these
I only fancied being, this long day:
— Approach, I mean, so as to touch them, so
As to . . . in some way . . . move them — if you please,
Do good or evil to them some slight way.
For instance, if I wind
Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind
[*Sitting on the bedside.*
And border Ottima's cloak's hem.
Ah me, and my important part with them,
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!
True in some sense or other, I suppose.
[*As she lies down.*
God bless me! I can pray no more to-night.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.

*All service ranks the same with God —*
*With God, whose puppets, best and worst,*
*Are we; there is no last nor first.*
[*She sleeps.*

## CAVALIER TUNES

[Publ. 1842]

### I. MARCHING ALONG

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you 're —
Cho. — Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell.
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

CHO. — Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,
CHO. — March we along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

II. GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who 'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who 's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here 's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!
Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?
CHO. — King Charles, and who 'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who 's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here 's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's damned troopers shot him?
CHO. — King Charles, and who 'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who 's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here 's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III. BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.
CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you 'd say;
Many 's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —
CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I 've better counsellors; what counsel they?
CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

## THE LOST LEADER

[Publ. 1842]

Browning was beset with questions by people asking if he referred to Wordsworth in this poem. He answered the question more than once, as an artist would: the following letter to Rev. A. B. Grosart, the editor of Wordsworth's *Prose Works*, sufficiently states his position.

19 Warwick-Crescent, W., *Feb.* 24, '75.

DEAR MR. GROSART, — I have been asked the question you now address me with, and as duly answered it, I can't remember how many times; there is no sort of objection to one more assurance or rather confession, on my part, that I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account; had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about "handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon." These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet, whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. But just as in the tapestry on my wall I can recognize figures which have *struck out* a fancy, on occasion, that though truly enough thus derived, yet would be preposterous as a copy, so, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as the "very effigies" of such a moral and intellectual superiority.

Faithfully yours,
ROBERT BROWNING.

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a ribband to stick in his coat —
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;

They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags — were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
— He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!
We shall march prospering, — not through his presence;
Songs may inspirit us, — not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done, — while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him — strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

## "HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"

[Publ. 1842]

Browning wrote to an American inquirer about this poem: "There is no sort of historical foundation for the poem about 'Good News from Ghent.' I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel, off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York,' then in my stable at home. It was written in pencil on the fly-leaf of Bartoli's *Simboli*, I remember."

[16—]

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'T was moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 't was morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,

To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence, — ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault 's not in her,
We 'll remember at Aix" — for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they 'll greet us!" — and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is — friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

## CRISTINA

[Publ. 1842]

She should never have looked at me
If she meant I should not love her!
There are plenty . . . men, you call such,
I suppose . . . she may discover
All her soul to, if she pleases,
And yet leave much as she found them:
But I 'm not so, and she knew it
When she fixed me, glancing round them.

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
But I can't tell (there 's my weakness)
What her look said! — no vile cant, sure,
About "need to strew the bleakness
Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,
That the sea feels" — no "strange yearning
That such souls have, most to lavish
Where there 's chance of least returning."

Oh, we 're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure though seldom, are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honors perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse,
Which for once had played unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a lifetime,
That away the rest have trifled.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
As she fixed me, she felt clearly,
Ages past the soul existed,
Here an age 't is resting merely,
And hence fleets again for ages,
While the true end, sole and single,
It stops here for is, this love-way,
With some other soul to mingle?

Else it loses what it lived for,
And eternally must lose it;
Better ends may be in prospect,
Deeper blisses (if you choose it),
But this life's end and this love-bliss
Have been lost here. Doubt you whether
This she felt as, looking at me,
Mine and her souls rushed together?

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,
The world's honors, in derision,
Trampled out the light forever:
Never fear but there 's provision
Of the devil's to quench knowledge
Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
—Making those who catch God's secret
Just so much more prize their capture!

Such am I: the secret 's mine now!
She has lost me, I have gained her;
Her soul 's mine: and thus, grown perfect,
I shall pass my life's remainder.
Life will just hold out the proving
Both our powers, alone and blended:
And then, come the next life quickly!
This world's use will have been ended.

## LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

[Publ. 1842]

WHERE the quiet-colored end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one,)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,

By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks —
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away —
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts, — and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force —
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

## UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY)

[Publ. 1842]

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
— I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair 's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city — the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there 's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over
in March by rights,
'T is May perhaps ere the snow shall have
withered well off the heights:
You 've the brown ploughed land before,
where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the
faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You 've
summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few
strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce
risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out
its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the
children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There 's a
fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the
shine such foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that
prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch — fifty
gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds
round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to
see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's
lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix
i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks
of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stun-
ning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine
round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons, — I spare you the
months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the
blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the dili-
gence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs
you never a pin.
By and by there 's the travelling doctor
gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the
market beneath.

At the post-office such a scene-picture —
the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three
liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most
fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion,
some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the
Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint
Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhym-
ing,) "the skirts of Saint Paul has
reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lec-
tures more unctuous than ever he
preached."
Noon strikes, — here sweeps the procession!
our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and
seven swords stuck in her heart!
*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-
tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it 's the
greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it 's dear — it 's dear! fowls,
wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and
what oil pays passing the gate
It 's a horror to think of. And so, the villa
for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still
— ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the
monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts,
a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and an-
other a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear,
for the better prevention of scandals:
*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-
tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no
such pleasure in life!

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April 's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,

That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That 's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?" — say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

## SAUL

The first nine sections of this poem were printed under the same title in 1845. The poem as enlarged was published in 1855.

I

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness: but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness — the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the centre, that goes to each side;
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king-serpent all heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the spring-time, — so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp, — took off the lilies we twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide — those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us, — so blue and so far!

VI

— Then the tune for which quails on the corn-land will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house —
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life. — And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey — "Bear, bear him along,
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!" — And then, the glad chaunt
Of the marriage, — first go the young maidens, next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling. — And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends? Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here: for here in the darkness Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered: and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head: but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang: —

IX

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,

And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best'?
Then they sung through their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true:
And the friends of thy boyhood — that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope, —
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go)
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them, — all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature — King Saul!"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit, — heart, hand, harp and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for — as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains through its array,
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot — "Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate, — leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold —
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest — all hail, there they are!
— Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse 'twixt hope and despair,
Death was past, life not come: so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter: 't was Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean — a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely: so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

XI

What spell or what charm,
(For awhile there was trouble within me,) what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him? — Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not: he lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep
Fed in silence — above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky:
And I laughed — "Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for." And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus —

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
I began — "thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree, — how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these too, in turn,
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect: yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime, — so, each ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last:
As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man — so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb — bid arise

A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers: whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe, — Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid, —
For not half, they 'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story, — the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river 's a-wave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art!"

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure, — my shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word, —
Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me — till, mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance — God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending — my voice to my heart
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV

I say then, — my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and ever more strong
Made a proffer of good to console him — he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes
Of his turban, and see — the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory, — ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
And sat out my singing, — one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack — till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair

The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power —
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine —
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
I yearned — "Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
As this moment, — had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more — no song more! outbroke —

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork — returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw:
I report, as a man may of God's work — all 's love, yet all 's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes, — and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There 's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance, (I laugh as I think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift. — Behold, I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain for love's sake.
— What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appall?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator, — the end, what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection, — succeed with life's dayspring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now, — and bid him awake

From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life, — a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended — who knows? — or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'T is thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
*I* will? — the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loth
To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my despair?
This; — 't is not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!
See the King — I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would — knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou — so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown —
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'T is the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news —
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tinkled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth —
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent, — he felt the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;

The same worked in the heart of the cedar
and moved the vine-bowers:
And the little brooks witnessing murmured,
persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices
—"E'en so, it is so!"

## MY STAR

[Publ. 1872]

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

## INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

## MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps

Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who 'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
— E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We 'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we 'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

## THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

**This poem was written after Browning's visit to Italy in 1844.**

That second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds through the country-side,
Breathed hot and instant on my trace, —
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love:
— How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start,

Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground;
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath: they disappeared:
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts on me
Rested the hopes of Italy;
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 't was told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm —
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
"I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us: the State
Will give you gold — oh, gold so much! —
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now, you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you 'll reach at night
Before the duomo shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ begin;
Walk to the third confessional,
Between the pillar and the wall,
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time, then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
*From Christ and Freedom; what concerns*
*The cause of Peace?*—for answer, slip
My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service — I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes:
I was no surer of sunrise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover — stout and tall,
She said — then let her eyelids fall,
"He could do much" — as if some doubt
Entered her heart, — then, passing out,
"She could not speak for others, who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew:"
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days, the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me: she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand, and lay my own
Upon her head — "This faith was shown
To Italy, our mother; she
Uses my hand and blesses thee."
She followed down to the sea-shore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning — much less wished for — aught
Beside the good of Italy,
For which I live and mean to die!
I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I have a friend?
However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself — say, three —
I know at least what one should be.
I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distil
In blood through these two hands. And next
— Nor much for that am I perplexed —
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last
— Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared
My brothers live in Austria's pay
— Disowned me long ago, men say;
And all my early mates who used
To praise me so — perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine —
Are turning wise: while some opine
"Freedom grows license," some suspect
"Haste breeds delay," and recollect
They always said, such premature
Beginnings never could endure!

So, with a sullen "All 's for best,"
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt: what harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,
And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes — just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I 'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing — how
It steals the time! To business now.

## THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I SAID — Then, dearest, since 't is so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be —
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave, — I claim
Only a memory of the same,
— And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions — sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once —
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here! —
Thus leant she and lingered — joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought, — All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There 's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And place them in rhyme so, side by side.
'T is something, nay 't is much: but then,
Have you yourself what 's best for men?
Are you — poor, sick, old ere your time —

Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor — so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown gray
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what 's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being — had I signed the bond —
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet — she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life forever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity, —
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, forever ride?

## PROTUS

Among these latter busts we count by scores,
Half-emperors and quarter-emperors,
Each with his bay-leaf fillet, loose-thonged vest,
Loric and low-browed Gorgon on the breast, —
One loves a baby face, with violets there,
Violets instead of laurel in the hair,
As those were all the little locks could bear.

Now read here. "Protus ends a period
Of empery beginning with a god;
Born in the porphyry chamber at Byzant,
Queens by his cradle, proud and ministrant:
And if he quickened breath there, 't would like fire
Pantingly through the dim vast realm transpire.
A fame that he was missing spread afar:
The world, from its four corners, rose in war,
Till he was borne out on a balcony
To pacify the world when it should see.
The captains ranged before him, one, his hand
Made baby points at, gained the chief command.
And day by day more beautiful he grew
In shape, all said, in feature and in hue,
While young Greek sculptors, gazing on the child,
Became with old Greek sculpture reconciled.
Already sages labored to condense
In easy tomes a life's experience:
And artists took grave counsel to impart
In one breath and one hand-sweep, all their art —
To make his graces prompt as blossoming
Of plentifully-watered palms in spring:
Since well beseems it, whoso mounts the throne,
For beauty, knowledge, strength, should stand alone,
And mortals love the letters of his name."

— Stop! Have you turned two pages? Still the same
New reign, same date. The scribe goes on to say
How that same year, on such a month and day,
"John the Pannonian, groundedly believed
A blacksmith's bastard, whose hard hand reprieved
The Empire from its fate the year before, —
Came, had a mind to take the crown, and wore
The same for six years (during which the Huns
Kept off their fingers from us), till his sons
Put something in his liquor" — and so forth.
Then a new reign. Stay — "Take at its just worth"
(Subjoins an annotator) "what I give
As hearsay. Some think, John let Protus live

And slip away. 'T is said, he reached man's age
At some blind northern court; made, first a page,
Then tutor to the children; last, of use
About the hunting-stables. I deduce
He wrote the little tract 'On worming dogs,'
Whereof the name in sundry catalogues
Is extant yet. A Protus of the race
Is rumored to have died a monk in Thrace,—
And if the same, he reached senility."
Here 's John the Smith's rough-hammered head. Great eye,
Gross jaw and griped lips do what granite can
To give you the crown-grasper. What a man!

## THE STATUE AND THE BUST

This poem was published first in 1855 as an independent issue. A correspondent of an American paper once asked the following questions respecting this poem: —

"1. When, how, and where did it happen? Browning's divine vagueness lets one gather only that the lady's husband was a Riccardi. 2. Who was the lady? who the duke? 3. The magnificent house wherein Florence lodges her préfet is known to all Florentine ball-goers as the Palazzo Riccardi. It was bought by the Riccardi from the Medici in 1659. From none of its windows did the lady gaze at her more than royal lover. From what window, then, if from any? Are the statue and the bust still in their original positions?"

The letter fell into the hands of Mr. Thomas J. Wise, who sent it to Mr. Browning, and received the following answer.

Jan. 8, 1887.

Dear Mr. Wise, — I have seldom met with such a strange inability to understand what seems the plainest matter possible: "ball-goers" are probably not history-readers, but any guide-book would confirm what is sufficiently stated in the poem. I will append a note or two, however. 1. "This story the townsmen tell"; "when, how, and where," constitutes the subject of the poem. 2. The lady was the wife of Riccardi; and the duke, Ferdinand, just as the poem says. 3. As it was built by, and inhabited by, the Medici till sold, long after, to the Riccardi, it was not from the duke's palace, but a window in that of the Riccardi, that the lady gazed at her lover riding by. The statue is still in its place, looking at the window under which "now is the empty shrine." Can anything be clearer? My "vagueness" leaves what to be "gathered" when all these things are put down in black and white? Oh, "ball-goers"!

There 's a palace in Florence, the world knows well,
And a statue watches it from the square,
And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,
At the farthest window facing the East
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
She leaned forth, one on either hand;
They saw how the blush of the bride increased —

They felt by its beats her heart expand —
As one at each ear and both in a breath
Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdinand."

That selfsame instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
Till he threw his head back — "Who is she?"
— "A bride the Riccardi brings home today."

Hair in heaps lay heavily
Over a pale brow spirit-pure —
Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure —
And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes
Of the blackest black our eyes endure,

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man, —
The Duke grew straightway brave and wise.

He looked at her, as a lover can;
She looked at him, as one who awakes:
The past was a sleep, and her life began.

Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,
A feast was held that selfsame night
In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,
But the palace overshadows one,
Because of a crime, which may God requite!

To Florence and God the wrong was done,
Through the first republic's murder there
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in the square)
Turned in the midst of his multitude
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued —

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor —
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not think,
Only one out of a thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was shut on her
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Through a certain window facing the East
She could watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride —
"Your window and its world suffice,"
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied —

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'T is only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim.
And I save my soul — but not to-morrow" —

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)
"My father tarries to bless my state:
I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know;
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing and sleep:
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove)

And smiled, "'T was a very funeral,
Your lady will think, this feast of ours, —
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno bowers,
And try if Petraja, cool and green,
Cure last night's fault with this morning's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favor for me so mean!

"But, alas! my lady leaves the South;
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
Is a menace to her tender youth:

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "Asage and a kindly fear.
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring:
Be our feast to-night as usual here!"

And then to himself — "Which night shall bring
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool —
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool —
For to-night the Envoy arrives from France
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss perchance.
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,
With its hope of my lady's countenance:

"For I ride — what should I do but ride?
And passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window — well betide!"

So said, so done: nor the lady missed
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one day more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth:
The rose would blow when the storm passed by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's dearth
By store of fruits that supplant the rose:
The world and its ways have a certain worth:

And to press a point while these oppose
Were simple policy; better wait:
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,
Who daily may ride and pass and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she — she watched the square like a book
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook:

When the picture was reached the book was done,
And she turned from the picture at night to scheme
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by gleam
The glory dropped from their youth and love,
And both perceived they had dreamed a dream;

Which hovered as dreams do, still above:
But who can take a dream for a truth?
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove!

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked, —
And wondered who the woman was,
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass —
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who fashions the clay no love will change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair,
And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there,
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square!

"And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must spend
Down in their darkness under the aisle,

"To say, 'What matters it at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.'

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm —

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine,
With flowers and fruits which leaves enlace,
Was set where now is the empty shrine —

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space,
As a ghost might lean from a chink of sky,
The passionate pale lady's face —

Eying ever, with earnest eye
And quick-turned neck at its breathless stretch,
Some one who ever is passing by —)

The Duke had sighed like the simplest wretch
In Florence, "Youth — my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them fetch

Some subtle moulder of brazen shapes —
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay shall effect my plan,
Set me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

"In the very square I have crossed so oft:
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

"While the mouth and the brow stay brave in bronze —
Admire and say, 'When he was alive
How he would take his pleasure once!'

"And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive."

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So! while these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of his,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss —
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned his way through the world to this.

I hear you reproach, "But delay was best,
For their end was a crime." — Oh, a crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself
And prove its worth at a moment's view!

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?
Where a button goes, 't were an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham:
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table 's a hat, and your prize, a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it.

If you choose to play! — is my principle.
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is — the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

## FRA LIPPO LIPPI

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what 's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, 't is past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
The Carmine 's my cloister: hunt it up,
Do, — harry out, if you must show your zeal,
Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,
*Weke, weke,* that 's crept to keep him company!
Aha, you know your betters! Then, you 'll take
Your hand away that 's fiddling on my throat,
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?

Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off — he 's a certain . . . how d' ye call ?
Master — a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,
I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!
Remember and tell me, the day you 're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves
Pick up a manner, nor discredit you:
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets
And count fair prize what comes into their net ?
He 's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.
Lord, I 'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbors me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
And all 's come square again. I 'd like his face —
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern, — for the slave that holds
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand (" Look you, now," as who should say)
And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
It 's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
A wood-coal or the like ? or you should see !
Yes, I 'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
You know them and they take you ? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye —
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let 's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here 's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands
To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I 've been three weeks shut within my mew,
A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night —
Ouf ! I leaned out of window for fresh air.
There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song, —
*Flower o' the broom,*
*Take away love, and our earth is a tomb !*
*Flower o' the quince,*
*I let Lisa go, and what good in life since ?*
*Flower o' the thyme* — and so on. Round they went.
Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight, — three slim shapes,
And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh and blood,
That 's all I 'm made of ! Into shreds it went,
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture — a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped,
And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well met, —
*Flower o' the rose,*
*If I 've been merry, what matter who knows?*
And so as I was stealing back again
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see !
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head —
Mine 's shaved — a monk, you say — the sting 's in that !
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum 's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for ? tell us, now !
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two
On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,
My stomach being empty as your hat,
The wind doubled me up and down I went.

Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand,
(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there,
While I stood munching my first bread that month:
"So, boy, you 're minded," quoth the good fat father,
Wiping his own mouth, 't was refection-time, —
"To quit this very miserable world?
Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?" thought I;
By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
Have given their hearts to — all at eight years old.
Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
'T was not for nothing — the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
And day-long blessed idleness beside!
"Let 's see what the urchin 's fit for" — that came next.
Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
Such a to-do! They tried me with their books;
Lord, they 'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
*Flower o' the clove,*
*All the Latin I construe is "amo," I love!*
But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,
And who will curse or kick him for his pains, —
Which gentleman processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped, —
How say I? — nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
His bone from the heap of offal in the street, —
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
He learns the look of things, and none the less
For admonition from the hunger-pinch.
I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
Scrawled them within the antiphonary's marge,
Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,
And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.
"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d' ye say?
In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts.
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
And put the front on it that ought to be!"
And hereupon he bade me daub away.
Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a blank,
Never was such prompt disemburdening.
First, every sort of monk, the black and white,
I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends, —
To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years)

Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,
(Which the intense eyes looked through)
came at eve
On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and so
was gone.
I painted all, then cried "'T is ask and
have;
Choose, for more 's ready!" — laid the
ladder flat,
And showed my covered bit of cloister-
wall.
The monks closed in a circle and praised
loud
Till checked, taught what to see and not to
see,
Being simple bodies, — "That 's the very
man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the
dog!
That woman 's like the Prior's niece who
comes
To care about his asthma: it 's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared
and funked;
Their betters took their turn to see and
say:
The Prior and the learned pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. "How?
what 's here?
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us
all!
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! it 's devil's-
game!
Your business is not to catch men with
show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there 's such a thing as
flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men —
Man's soul, and it 's a fire, smoke . . . no,
it 's not . . .
It 's vapor done up like a new-born babe —
(In that shape when you die it leaves your
mouth)
It 's . . . well, what matters talking, it 's
the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here 's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising
God,
That sets us praising, — why not stop with
him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our
head
With wonder at lines, colors, and what
not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and
arms!
Rub all out, try at it a second time.
Oh, that white smallish female with the
breasts,
She 's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would
say, —
Who went and danced and got men's heads
cut off!
Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I
ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go
further
And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does
for white
When what you put for yellow 's simply
black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks
naught.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest
face,
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint — is it
so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I 've made her eyes all right and
blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's
flash,
And then add soul and heighten them three-
fold?
Or say there 's beauty with no soul at all —
(I never saw it — put the case the same —)
If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents:
That 's somewhat: and you 'll find the soul
you have missed,
Within yourself, when you return him
thanks.
"Rub all out!" Well, well, there 's my
life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I 'm grown a man no doubt, I 've broken
bounds:
You should not take a fellow eight years
old

And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
I 'm my own master, paint now as I please —
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!
Lord, it 's fast holding by the rings in front —
Those great rings serve more purposes than just
To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still — "It 's art's decline, my son!
You 're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico 's the man, you 'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:
Fag on at flesh, you 'll never make the third!"
*Flower o' the pine,*
*You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I 'll stick to mine!*
I 'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know!
Don't you think they 're the likeliest to know,
They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them — sometimes do and sometimes don't;
For, doing most, there 's pretty sure to come
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints —
A laugh, a cry, the business of the world —
(*Flower o' the peach,*
*Death for us all, and his own life for each!*)
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,
The world and life 's too big to pass for a dream,
And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,
In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass
After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.
What would men have? Do they like grass or no —
May they or may n't they? all I want 's the thing
Settled forever one way. As it is,
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself:
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.
For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
I always see the garden and God there
A-making man's wife: and, my lesson learned,
The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me: I 'm a beast, I know.
But see, now — why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star 's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We 've a young-ster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop:
His name is Guidi — he 'll not mind the monks —
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk —
He picks my practice up — he 'll paint apace,
I hope so — though I never live so long,
I know what 's sure to follow. You be judge!
You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you 're my man, you 've seen the world
— The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises, — and God made it all!
— For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are the frame to? What 's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? oh, this last of course! — you say.
But why not do as well as say, — paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works — paint any one, and count it crime

To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already; nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her — (which you can't)
There 's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark? we 're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted — better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How much more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world 's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the Prior: "when your meaning 's plain
It does not say to folk — remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what 's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"
I ask a brother: "Hugely," he returns —
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But 's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,
The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage:
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd —
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

— That is — you 'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now!
It 's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself:
And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
. . . There 's for you! Give me six months, then go, see
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!
They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root
When ladies crowd to Church at midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or two —
Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,
Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,
And Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotion, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I! —
Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck — I 'm the man!
Back I shrink — what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!

Where 's a hole, where 's a corner for escape ?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
Forward, puts out a soft palm — "Not so fast !"
— Addresses the celestial presence, "nay —
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he 's none of you ! Could Saint John there draw —
His camel-hair make up a painting-brush ?
We come to brother Lippo for all that,
*Iste perfecit opus !"* So, all smile —
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you 're gay
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband ! Thus I scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go
The palm of her, the little lily thing
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,
Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.
And so all 's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence !
Your hand, sir, and good-by: no lights, no lights !
The street 's hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don't fear me ! There 's the gray beginning, Zooks !

## ANDREA DEL SARTO

### CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart ?
I 'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it ? tenderly ?
Oh, I 'll content him, — but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if — forgive now — should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so —
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
— How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet —
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks — no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile ? why, there 's my picture ready made,
There 's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything, —
All in a twilight, you and I alike
— You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That 's gone you know), — but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There 's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh ? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!

I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example — turn your head —
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
— It is the thing, Love! so such thing should be —
Behold Madonna! — I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep —
Do easily, too — when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,
— Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive — you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter) — so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word —
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!"
No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art — for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put — and there again —
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right — that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch —
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think —
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you — oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too, the power —
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'T is safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look, —
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts, —
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know —
'T is done and past; 't was right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I 'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was — to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife" —
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there 's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he 's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)

If really there was such a chance, so lost, —
Is, whether you 're — not grateful — but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there 's a star;
Morello 's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love, — come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you — you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles by me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work 's my ware, and what 's it worth?
I 'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more — the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them — that is, Michel Agnolo —
Judge all I do, and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand — there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What 's better and what 's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis! — it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures — let him try!
No doubt, there 's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance —
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover — the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So — still they overcome
Because there 's still Lucrezia, — as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

## RABBI BEN EZRA

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:

Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all,
nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends,
transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a
spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop full bird? Frets doubt
the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I
must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
grudge the throe!

For thence, — a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks, —
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not
sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs
want play?
To man, propose this test —
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its
lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good
to live and learn"?

Not once beat "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete, — I trust what
thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute, — gain most, as
we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon
the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now,
than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though
in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to
indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots — "Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay, —
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
*That* was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I — to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily — mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

## CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS;

### OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things course,
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh:
And while above his head a pompion-plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch, —
He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross
And recross till they weave a spider-web,
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times,)
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
Touching that other, whom his dam called God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes — ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep
In confidence he drudges at their task,
And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that:
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,

A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life,
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun,)
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,
And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye
By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize,
But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves
That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks
About their hole — He made all these and more,
Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?
He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate; as well have made Himself:
He would not make what He mislikes or slights,
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains:
But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be —
Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,
Things He admires and mocks too, — that is it.
Because, so brave, so better though they be,
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.
Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,
Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss, —
Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,
Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my brain;
Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,
And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.
Put case, unable to be what I wish,
I yet could make a live bird out of clay:
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban
Able to fly? — for, there, see, he hath wings,
And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,
And there, a sting to do his foes offence,
There, and I will that he begin to live,
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din,
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not.
In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay,
And he lay stupid-like, — why, I should laugh;
And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again, —
Well, as the chance were, this might take or else
Not take my fancy: I might hear his cry,
And give the manikin three sound legs for one,
Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,
And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.
Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme,
Drinking the mash, with brain become alive,
Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,
Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
That march now from the mountain to the sea;
'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.
'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;

'Sav, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,
Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,
But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!
Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,
And envieth that, so helped, such things do more
Than He who made them! What consoles but this?
That they, unless through Him, do naught at all,
And must submit: what other use in things?
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint
That, blown through, gives exact the scream o' the jay
When from her wing you twitch the feathers blue:
Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay
Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is hurt:
Put case such pipe could prattle and boast forsooth,
"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,
I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must blow through mine!"
Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?
Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,
What knows, — the something over Setebos
That made Him, or He, may be, found and fought,
Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, perchance.
There may be something quiet o'er His head,
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,
Since both derive from weakness in some way.
I joy because the quails come; would not joy
Could I bring quails here when I have a mind:
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,
But never spends much thought nor care that way.
It may look up, work up, — the worse for those
It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,
Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,
These good things to match those as hips do grapes.
'T is solace making baubles, ay, and sport.
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books
Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle:
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,
Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;
Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe
The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;
And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling mole,
A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,
Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,
And saith she is Miranda and my wife:
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane
He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;
Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,
And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge
In a hole o' the rock and calls him Caliban;
A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.
'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
Taketh his mirth with make-believes: so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things
Which Setebos vexed only: 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.

Had He meant other, while His hand was in,
Why not make horny eyes no thorn could prick,
Or plate my scalp with bone against the snow,
Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint,
Like an orc's armor? Ay,—so spoil His sport!
He is the One now: only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits Him.
Ay, himself loves what does him good; but why?
'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded beast
Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but hate
Or love, just as it liked him: He hath eyes.
Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,
Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,
By no means for the love of what is worked.
'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world
When all goes right, in this safe summer-time,
And he wants little, hungers, aches not much,
Than trying what to do with wit and strength.
'Falls to make something: 'piled yon pile of turfs,
And squared and stuck there squares of soft white chalk,
And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on each,
And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,
And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull a-top,
Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to kill.
No use at all i' the work, for work's sole sake;
'Shall some day knock it down again: so He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in proof!
One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.
He hath a spite against me, that I know,
Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why?
So it is, all the same, as well I find.
'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm
With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises
Crawling to lay their eggs here: well, one wave,
Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,
And licked the whole labor flat: so much for spite.

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)
Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the shade:
Often they scatter sparkles: there is force!
'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.
Please Him and hinder this?—What Prosper does?
Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!
There is the sport: discover how or die!
All need not die, for of the things o' the isle
Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees;
Those at His mercy,—why, they please Him most
When . . . when . . . well, never try the same way twice!
Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow wroth.
You must not know His ways, and play Him off,
Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself:
'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears
But steals the nut from underneath my thumb,
And when I threat, bites stoutly in defence:
'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death
For fright at my approach: the two ways please.
But what would move my choler more than this,
That either creature counted on its life
To-morrow and next day and all days to come,
Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart,
"Because he did so yesterday with me,
And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always."—Ay?

Would teach the reasoning couple what
"must" means!
'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So
He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no
change,
If He have done His best, make no new
world
To please Him more, so leave off watching
this, —
If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day, — or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies: else, here we are,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop.
His dam held different, that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted
friends:
Idly! He doth His worst in this our life,
Giving just respite lest we die through pain,
Saving last pain for worst, — with which, an
end.
Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their
ball
On head and tail as if to save their lives:
Moves them the stick away they strive to
clear.

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive,
suppose
This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him;
Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,
And never speaks his mind save housed as
now:
Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me
here,
O'erheard this speech, and asked "What
chucklest at?"
'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste:
While myself lit a fire, and made a song
And sung it, "*What I hate, be consecrate*
*To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate*
*For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?*"
Hoping the while, since evils sometimes
mend,
Warts rub away and sores are cured with
slime,
That some strange day, will either the Quiet
catch
And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

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[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at
once!
Crickets stop hissing; not a bird — or, yes,
There scuds His raven that has told Him
all!
It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The
wind
Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house
o' the move,
And fast invading fires begin! White
blaze —
A tree's head snaps — and there, there,
there, there, there,
His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!
Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper
lip,
Will let those quails fly, will not eat this
month
One little mess of whelks, so he may
'scape!]

## PROSPICE

[Written in the autumn following Mrs. Browning's death. The closing lines intensify the association.]

FEAR death? — to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the
storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible
form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit
attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle 's to fight ere the guerdon
be gained,

The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute 's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

## THE RING AND THE BOOK

### BOOK VII

### POMPILIA

I AM just seventeen years and five months old,
And, if I lived one day more, three full weeks;
'T is writ so in the church's register,
Lorenzo in Lucina, all my names
At length, so many names for one poor child,
— Francesca Camilla Vittoria Angela
Pompilia Comparini, — laughable!
Also 't is writ that I was married there
Four years ago: and they will add, I hope,
When they insert my death, a word or two, —
Omitting all about the mode of death, —
This, in its place, this which one cares to know,
That I had been a mother of a son
Exactly two weeks. It will be through grace
O' the Curate, not through any claim I have;
Because the boy was born at, so baptized
Close to, the Villa, in the proper church:
A pretty church, I say no word against,
Yet stranger-like, — while this Lorenzo seems
My own particular place, I always say.
I used to wonder, when I stood scarce high
As the bed here, what the marble lion meant,
With half his body rushing from the wall,
Eating the figure of a prostrate man —
(To the right, it is, of entry by the door) —
An ominous sign to one baptized like me,
Married, and to be buried there, I hope.
And they should add, to have my life complete,
He is a boy and Gaetan by name —
Gaetano, for a reason, — if the friar
Don Celestine will ask this grace for me
Of Curate Ottoboni: he it was
Baptized me: he remembers my whole life
As I do his gray hair.

All these few things
I know are true, — will you remember them?
Because time flies. The surgeon cared for me,
To count my wounds, — twenty-two dagger-wounds,
Five deadly, but I do not suffer much —
Or too much pain, — and am to die to-night.

Oh how good God is that my babe was born,
— Better than born, baptized and hid away
Before this happened, safe from being hurt!
That had been sin God could not well forgive:
He was too young to smile and save himself.
When they took, two days after he was born,
My babe away from me to be baptized
And hidden awhile, for fear his foe should find, —
The country-woman, used to nursing babes,
Said, "Why take on so? where is the great loss?
These next three weeks he will but sleep and feed,
Only begin to smile at the month's end;
He would not know you, if you kept him here,
Sooner than that; so, spend three merry weeks

Snug in the Villa, getting strong and stout,
And then I bring him back to be your own,
And both of you may steal to — we know where!"
The month — there wants of it two weeks this day!
Still, I half fancied when I heard the knock
At the Villa in the dusk, it might prove she —
Come to say, "Since he smiles before the time,
Why should I cheat you out of one good hour?
Back I have brought him; speak to him and judge!"
Now I shall never see him; what is worse,
When he grows up and gets to be my age,
He will seem hardly more than a great boy;
And if he asks, "What was my mother like?"
People may answer, "Like girls of seventeen" —
And how can he but think of this and that,
Lucias, Marias, Sofias, who titter or blush
When he regards them as such boys may do?
Therefore I wish some one will please to say
I looked already old though I was young;
Do I not . . . say, if you are by to speak . . .
Look nearer twenty? No more like, at least,
Girls who look arch or redden when boys laugh,
Than the poor Virgin that I used to know
At our street-corner in a lonely niche, —
The babe, that sat upon her knees, broke off, —
Thin white glazed clay, you pitied her the more:
She, not the gay ones, always got my rose.

How happy those are who know how to write!
Such could write what their son should read in time,
Had they a whole day to live out like me.
Also my name is not a common name,
"Pompilia," and may help to keep apart
A little the thing I am from what girls are.
But then how far away, how hard to find
Will anything about me have become,
Even if the boy bethink himself and ask!
No father that ever knew at all,
Nor ever had — no, never had, I say!
That is the truth, — nor any mother left,
Out of the little two weeks that she lived,
Fit for such memory as might assist:
As good too as no family, no name,
Not even poor old Pietro's name, nor hers,
Poor kind unwise Violante, since it seems
They must not be my parents any more.
That is why something put it in my head
To call the boy "Gaetano" — no old name
For sorrow's sake; I looked up to the sky
And took a new saint to begin anew.
One who has only been made saint — how long?
Twenty-five years: so, carefuller, perhaps,
To guard a namesake than those old saints grow,
Tired out by this time, — see my own five saints!

On second thoughts, I hope he will regard
The history of me as what some one dreamed,
And get to disbelieve it at the last:
Since to myself it dwindles fast to that,
Sheer dreaming and impossibility, —
Just in four days too! All the seventeen years,
Not once did a suspicion visit me
How very different a lot is mine
From any other woman's in the world.
The reason must be, 't was by step and step
It got to grow so terrible and strange.
These strange woes stole on tiptoe, as it were,
Into my neighborhood and privacy,
Sat down where I sat, laid them where I lay;
And I was found familiarized with fear,
When friends broke in, held up a torch and cried,
"Why, you Pompilia in the cavern thus,
How comes that arm of yours about a wolf?
And the soft length, — lies in and out your feet
And laps you round the knee, — a snake it is!"
And so on.

Well, and they are right enough.
By the torch they hold up now: for first, observe,
I never had a father, — no, nor yet
A mother: my own boy can say at least,
"I had a mother whom I kept two weeks!"
Not I, who little used to doubt . . . *I* doubt
Good Pietro, kind Violante, gave me birth?

They loved me always as I love my babe
(— Nearly so, that is — quite so could not be —)
Did for me all I meant to do for him,
Till one surprising day, three years ago,
They both declared, at Rome, before some judge
In some court where the people flocked to hear,
That really I had never been their child,
Was a mere castaway, the careless crime
Of an unknown man, the crime and care too much
Of a woman known too well, — little to these,
Therefore, of whom I was the flesh and blood:
What then to Pietro and Violante, both
No more my relatives than you or you?
Nothing to them! You know what they declared.

So with my husband, — just such a surprise,
Such a mistake, in that relationship!
Every one says that husbands love their wives,
Guard them and guide them, give them happiness;
'T is duty, law, pleasure, religion: well,
You see how much of this comes true in mine!
People indeed would fain have somehow proved
He was no husband: but he did not hear,
Or would not wait, and so has killed us all.
Then there is . . . only let me name one more!
There is the friend, — men will not ask about,
But tell untruths of, and give nicknames to,
And think my lover, most surprise of all!
Do only hear, it is the priest they mean,
Giuseppe Caponsacchi: a priest — love,
And love me! Well, yet people think he did.
I am married, he has taken priestly vows,
They know that, and yet go on, say, the same,
"Yes, how he loves you!" "That was love" — they say,
When anything is answered that they ask:
Or else "No wonder you love him" — they say.
Then they shake heads, pity much, scarcely blame —
As if we neither of us lacked excuse,
And anyhow are punished to the full,
And downright love atones for everything!
Nay, I heard read out in the public court
Before the judge, in presence of my friends,
Letters 't was said the priest had sent to me,
And other letters sent him by myself,
We being lovers!

Listen what this is like!
When I was a mere child, my mother . . . that 's
Violante, you must let me call her so,
Nor waste time, trying to unlearn the word, . . .
She brought a neighbor's child of my own age
To play with me of rainy afternoons:
And, since there hung a tapestry on the wall,
We two agreed to find each other out
Among the figures. "Tisbe, that is you,
With half-moon on your hair-knot, spear in hand,
Flying, but no wings, only the great scarf
Blown to a bluish rainbow at your back:
Call off your hound and leave the stag alone!"
"— And there are you, Pompilia, such green leaves
Flourishing out of your five finger-ends,
And all the rest of you so brown and rough:
Why is it you are turned a sort of tree?"
You know the figures never were ourselves
Though we nicknamed them so. Thus, all my life, —
As well what was, as what, like this, was not, —
Looks old, fantastic and impossible:
I touch a fairy thing that fades and fades.
— Even to my babe! I thought, when he was born,
Something began for once that would not end,
Nor change into a laugh at me, but stay
Forevermore, eternally quite mine.
Well, so he is, — but yet they bore him off,
The third day, lest my husband should lay traps
And catch him, and by means of him catch me.
Since they have saved him so, it was well done:
Yet thence comes such confusion of what was

With what will be, — that late seems long ago,
And, what years should bring round, already come,
Till even he withdraws into a dream
As the rest do: I fancy him grown great,
Strong, stern, a tall young man who tutors me,
Frowns with the others, "Poor imprudent child!
Why did you venture out of the safe streets?
Why go so far from help to that lone house?
Why open at the whisper and the knock?"

Six days ago when it was New Year's day,
We bent above the fire and talked of him,
What he should do when he was grown and great.
Violante, Pietro, each had given the arm
I leant on, to walk by, from couch to chair
And fireside, — laughed, as I lay safe at last,
"Pompilia's march from bed to board is made,
Pompilia back again and with a babe,
Shall one day lend his arm and help her walk!"
Then we all wished each other more New Years.
Pietro began to scheme — "Our cause is gained;
The law is stronger than a wicked man:
Let him henceforth go his way, leave us ours!
We will avoid the city, tempt no more
The greedy ones by feasting and parade, —
Live at the other villa, we know where,
Still farther off, and we can watch the babe
Grow fast in the good air; and wood is cheap
And wine sincere outside the city gate.
I still have two or three old friends will grope
Their way along the mere half-mile of road,
With staff and lantern on a moonless night
When one needs talk: they 'll find me, never fear,
And I 'll find them a flask of the old sort yet!"
Violante said, "You chatter like a crow:
Pompilia tires o' the tattle, and shall to bed:
Do not too much the first day, — somewhat more
To-morrow, and, the next, begin the cape
And hood and coat! I have spun wool enough."

Oh what a happy friendly eve was that!

And, next day, about noon, out Pietro went —
He was so happy and would talk so much,
Until Violante pushed and laughed him forth
Sight-seeing in the cold, — "So much to see
I' the churches! Swathe your throat three times!" she cried,
"And, above all, beware the slippery ways,
And bring us all the news by supper-time!"
He came back late, laid by cloak, staff and hat,
Powdered so thick with snow it made us laugh,
Rolled a great log upon the ash o' the hearth,
And bade Violante treat us to a flask,
Because he had obeyed her faithfully,
Gone sight-see through the seven, and found no church
To his mind like San Giovanni — "There 's the fold,
And all the sheep together, big as cats!
And such a shepherd, half the size of life,
Starts up and hears the angel" — when, at the door,
A tap: we started up: you know the rest.

Pietro at least had done no harm, I know;
Nor even Violante, so much harm as makes
Such revenge lawful. Certainly she erred —
Did wrong, how shall I dare say otherwise? —
In telling that first falsehood, buying me
From my poor faulty mother at a price,
To pass off upon Pietro as his child.
If one should take my babe, give him a name,
Say he was not Gaetano and my own,
But that some other woman made his mouth
And hands and feet, — how very false were that!
No good could come of that; and all harm did.
Yet if a stranger were to represent
"Needs must you either give your babe to me
And let me call him mine forevermore,
Or let your husband get him" — ah, my God,
That were a trial I refuse to face!

Well, just so here: it proved wrong but seemed right
To poor Violante — for there lay, she said,
My poor real dying mother in her rags,
Who put me from her with the life and all,
Poverty, pain, shame and disease at once,
To die the easier by what price I fetched —
Also (I hope) because I should be spared
Sorrow and sin, — why may not that have helped?
My father, — he was no one, any one, —
The worse, the likelier, — call him, — he who came,
Was wicked for his pleasure, went his way,
And left no trace to track by; there remained
Nothing but me, the unnecessary life,
To catch up or let fall, — and yet a thing
She could make happy, be made happy with,
This poor Violante, — who would frown thereat?

Well, God, you see! God plants us where we grow.
It is not that, because a bud is born
At a wild brier's end, full i' the wild beast's way,
We ought to pluck and put it out of reach
On the oak-tree top, — say, "There the bud belongs!"
She thought, moreover, real lies were lies told
For harm's sake; whereas this had good at heart,
Good for my mother, good for me, and good
For Pietro who was meant to love a babe,
And needed one to make his life of use,
Receive his house and land when he should die.
Wrong, wrong, and always wrong! how plainly wrong!
For see, this fault kept pricking, as faults do,
All the same at her heart: this falsehood hatched,
She could not let it go nor keep it fast.
She told me so, — the first time I was found
Locked in her arms once more after the pain,
When the nuns let me leave them and go home,
And both of us cried all the cares away, —
This it was set her on to make amends,
This brought about the marriage — simply this!
Do let me speak for her you blame so much!
When Paul, my husband's brother, found me out,
Heard there was wealth for who should marry me,
So, came and made a speech to ask my hand
For Guido, — she, instead of piercing straight
Through the pretence to the ignoble truth,
Fancied she saw God's very finger point,
Designate just the time for planting me
(The wild-brier slip she plucked to love and wear)
In soil where I could strike real root, and grow,
And get to be the thing I called myself:
For, wife and husband are one flesh, God says,
And I, whose parents seemed such and were none,
Should in a husband have a husband now,
Find nothing, this time, but was what it seemed,
— All truth and no confusion any more.
I know she meant all good to me, all pain
To herself, — since how could it be aught but pain
To give me up, so, from her very breast,
The wilding flower-tree-branch that, all those years,
She had got used to feel for and find fixed?
She meant well: has it been so ill i' the main?
That is but fair to ask: one cannot judge
Of what has been the ill or well of life,
The day that one is dying, — sorrows change
Into not altogether sorrow-like;
I do see strangeness but scarce misery,
Now it is over, and no danger more.
My child is safe; there seems not so much pain.
It comes, most like, that I am just absolved,
Purged of the past, the foul in me, washed fair, —
One cannot both have and not have, you know, —
Being right now, I am happy and color things.
Yes, everybody that leaves life sees all

Softened and bettered: so with other sights:
To me at least was never evening yet
But seemed far beautifuller than its day,
For past is past.

There was a fancy came,
When somewhere, in the journey with my friend,
We stepped into a hovel to get food;
And there began a yelp here, a bark there, —
Misunderstanding creatures that were wroth
And vexed themselves and us till we retired.
The hovel is life: no matter what dogs bit
Or cat scatched in the hovel I break from,
All outside is lone field, moon and such peace —
Flowing in, filling up as with a sea
Whereon comes Someone, walks fast on the white,
Jesus Christ's self, Don Celestine declares,
To meet me and calm all things back again.

Beside, up to my marriage, thirteen years
Were, each day, happy as the day was long:
This may have made the change too terrible.
I know that when Violante told me first
The cavalier — she meant to bring next morn,
Whom I must also let take, kiss my hand —
Would be at San Lorenzo the same eve
And marry me, — which over, we should go
Home both of us without him as before,
And, till she bade speak, I must hold my tongue,
Such being the correct way with girl-brides,
From whom one word would make a father blush, —
I know, I say, that when she told me this,
— Well, I no more saw sense in what she said
Than a lamb does in people clipping wool;
Only lay down and let myself be clipped.
And when next day the cavalier who came —
(Tisbe had told me that the slim young man
With wings at head, and wings at feet, and sword
Threatening a monster, in our tapestry,
Would eat a girl else, — was a cavalier) —
When he proved Guido Franceschini, — old

And nothing like so tall as I myself,
Hook-nosed and yellow in a bush of beard,
Much like a thing I saw on a boy's wrist,
He called an owl and used for catching birds, —
And when he took my hand and made a smile —
Why, the uncomfortableness of it all
Seemed hardly more important in the case
Than — when one gives you, say, a coin to spend —
Its newness or its oldness; if the piece
Weigh properly and buy you what you wish,
No matter whether you get grime or glare!
Men take the coin, return you grapes and figs.
Here, marriage was the coin, a dirty piece
Would purchase me the praise of those I loved:
About what else should I concern myself?

So, hardly knowing what a husband meant,
I supposed this or any man would serve,
No whit the worse for being so uncouth:
For I was ill once and a doctor came
With a great ugly hat, no plume thereto,
Black jerkin and black buckles and black sword,
And white sharp beard over the ruff in front,
And oh so lean, so sour-faced and austere! —
Who felt my pulse, made me put out my tongue,
Then oped a phial, dripped a drop or two
Of a black bitter something, — I was cured!
What mattered the fierce beard or the grim face?
It was the physic beautified the man,
Master Malpichi, — never met his match
In Rome, they said, — so ugly all the same!

However, I was hurried through a storm,
Next dark eve of December's deadest day —
How it rained! — through our street and the Lion's-mouth
And the bit of Corso, — cloaked round, covered close,
I was like something strange or contraband, —
Into blank San Lorenzo, up the aisle,
My mother keeping hold of me so tight,
I fancied we were come to see a corpse
Before the altar which she pulled me toward.

There we found waiting an unpleasant priest
Who proved the brother, not our parish friend,
But one with mischief-making mouth and eye,
Paul, whom I know since to my cost. And then
I heard the heavy church-door lock out help
Behind us: for the customary warmth,
Two tapers shivered on the altar. "Quick — Lose no time!" cried the priest. And straightway down
From . . . what 's behind the altar where he hid —
Hawk-nose and yellowness and bush and all,
Stepped Guido, caught my hand, and there was I
O' the chancel, and the priest had opened book,
Read here and there, made me say that and this,
And after, told me I was now a wife,
Honored indeed, since Christ thus weds the Church,
And therefore turned he water into wine,
To show I should obey my spouse like Christ.
Then the two slipped aside and talked apart,
And I, silent and scared, got down again
And joined my mother, who was weeping now.
Nobody seemed to mind us any more,
And both of us on tiptoe found our way
To the door which was unlocked by this, and wide.
When we were in the street, the rain had stopped,
All things looked better. At our own house-door,
Violante whispered, "No one syllable
To Pietro! Girl-brides never breathe a word!"
"— Well treated to a wetting, draggle-tails!"
Laughed Pietro as he opened — "Very near
You made me brave the gutter's roaring sea
To carry off from roost old dove and young,
Trussed up in church, the cote, by me, the kite!
What do these priests mean, praying folk to death
On stormy afternoons, with Christmas close
To wash our sins off nor require the rain?"
Violante gave my hand a timely squeeze,
Madonna saved me from immodest speech,
I kissed him and was quiet, being a bride.

When I saw nothing more, the next three weeks,
Of Guido — "Nor the Church sees Christ" thought I:
"Nothing is changed however, wine is wine
And water only water in our house.
Nor did I see that ugly doctor since
That cure of the illness: just as I was cured,
I am married, — neither scarecrow will return."

Three weeks, I chuckled — "How would Giulia stare,
And Tecla smile and Tisbe laugh outright,
Were it not impudent for brides to talk!" —
Until one morning, as I sat and sang
At the broidery-frame alone i' the chamber,
— loud
Voices, two, three together, sobbings too,
And my name, "Guido," "Paolo," flung like stones
From each to the other! In I ran to see.
There stood the very Guido and the priest
With sly face, — formal but nowise afraid, —
While Pietro seemed all red and angry, scarce
Able to stutter out his wrath in words;
And this it was that made my mother sob,
As he reproached her — "You have murdered us,
Me and yourself and this our child beside!"
Then Guido interposed, "Murdered or not,
Be it enough your child is now my wife!
I claim and come to take her." Paul put in,
"Consider — kinsman, dare I term you so? —
What is the good of your sagacity
Except to counsel in a strait like this?
I guarantee the parties man and wife
Whether you like or loathe it, bless or ban.
May spilt milk be put back within the bowl —
The done thing, undone? You, it is, we look
For counsel to, you fitliest will advise!

Since milk, though spilt and spoilt, does marble good,
Better we down on knees and scrub the floor,
Than sigh, 'the waste would make a syllabub!'
Help us so turn disaster to account,
So predispose the groom, he needs shall grace
The bride with favor from the very first,
Not begin marriage an imbittered man!"
He smiled, — the game so wholly in his hands!
While fast and faster sobbed Violante — "Ay,
All of us murdered, past averting now!
O my sin, O my secret!" and such like.

Then I began to half surmise the truth;
Something had happened, low, mean, underhand,
False, and my mother was to blame, and I
To pity, whom all spoke of, none addressed:
I was the chattel that had caused a crime.
I stood mute, — those who tangle must untie
The embroilment. Pietro cried, "Withdraw, my child!
She is not helpful to the sacrifice
At this stage, — do you want the victim by
While you discuss the value of her blood?
For her sake, I consent to hear you talk:
Go, child, and pray God help the innocent!"

I did go and was praying God, when came
Violante, with eyes swollen and red enough,
But movement on her mouth for make-believe
Matters were somehow getting right again.
She bade me sit down by her side and hear
"You are too young and cannot understand,
Nor did your father understand at first.
I wished to benefit all three of us,
And when he failed to take my meaning, — why,
I tried to have my way at unaware —
Obtained him the advantage he refused.
As if I put before him wholesome food
Instead of broken victual, — he finds change
I' the viands, never cares to reason why,
But falls to blaming me, would fling the plate
From window, scandalize the neighborhood,
Even while he smacks his lips, — men's way, my child!
But either you have prayed him unperverse
Or I have talked him back into his wits:
And Paolo was a help in time of need, —
Guido, not much — my child, the way of men!
A priest is more a woman than a man,
And Paul did wonders to persuade. In short,
Yes, he was wrong, your father sees and says;
My scheme was worth attempting: and bears fruit,
Gives you a husband and a noble name,
A palace and no end of pleasant things.
What do you care about a handsome youth?
They are so volatile, and tease their wives!
This is the kind of man to keep the house.
We lose no daughter, — gain a son, that 's all:
For 't is arranged we never separate,
Nor miss, in our gray time of life, the tints
Of you that color eve to match with morn.
In good or ill, we share and share alike,
And cast our lots into a common lap,
And all three die together as we lived!
Only, at Arezzo, — that 's a Tuscan town,
Not so large as this noisy Rome, no doubt,
But older far and finer much, say folk, —
In a great palace where you will be queen,
Know the Archbishop and the Governor,
And we see homage done you ere we die.
Therefore, be good and pardon!" — "Pardon what!
You know things, I am very ignorant:
All is right if you only will not cry!"

And so an end! Because a blank begins
From when, at the word, she kissed me hard and hot,
And took me back to where my father leaned
Opposite Guido — who stood eying him,
As eyes the butcher the cast panting ox
That feels his fate is come, nor struggles more, —
While Paul looked archly on, pricked brow at whiles
With the pen-point as to punish triumph there, —

And said, "Count Guido, take your lawful wife
Until death part you!"

All since is one blank,
Over and ended; a terrific dream.
It is the good of dreams — so soon they go!
Wake in a horror of heart-beats, you may —
Cry, "The dread thing will never from my thoughts!"
Still, a few daylight doses of plain life,
Cock-crow and sparrow-chirp, or bleat and bell
Of goats that trot by, tinkling, to be milked;
And when you rub your eyes awake and wide,
Where is the harm o' the horror? Gone! So here.
I know I wake, — but from what? Blank, I say!
This is the note of evil: for good lasts.
Even when Don Celestine bade "Search and find!
For your soul's sake, remember what is past,
The better to forgive it," — all in vain!
What was fast getting indistinct before,
Vanished outright. By special grace perhaps,
Between that first calm and this last, four years
Vanish, — one quarter of my life, you know.
I am held up, amid the nothingness,
By one or two truths only — thence I hang,
And there I live, — the rest is death or dream,
All but those points of my support. I think
Of what I saw at Rome once in the Square
O' the Spaniards, opposite the Spanish House:
There was a foreigner had trained a goat,
A shuddering white woman of a beast,
To climb up, stand straight on a pile of sticks
Put close, which gave the creature room enough:
When she was settled there, he, one by one,
Took away all the sticks, left just the four
Whereon the little hoofs did really rest,
There she kept firm, all underneath was air.
So, what I hold by, are my prayer to God,
My hope, that came in answer to the prayer,
Some hand would interpose and save me — hand
Which proved to be my friend's hand: and, — blest bliss, —
That fancy which began so faint at first,
That thrill of dawn's suffusion through my dark,
Which I perceive was promise of my child,
The light his unborn face sent long before, —
God's way of breaking the good news to flesh.
That is all left now of those four bad years.
Don Celestine urged, "But remember more!
Other men's faults may help me find your own.
I need the cruelty exposed, explained,
Or how can I advise you to forgive?"
He thought I could not properly forgive
Unless I ceased forgetting, — which is true:
For, bringing back reluctantly to mind
My husband's treatment of me, — by a light
That 's later than my lifetime, I review
And comprehend much and imagine more,
And have but little to forgive at last.
For now, — be fair and say, — is it not true
He was ill-used and cheated of his hope
To get enriched by marriage? Marriage gave
Me and no money, broke the compact so:
He had a right to ask me on those terms,
As Pietro and Violante to declare
They would not give me: so the bargain stood:
They broke it, and he felt himself aggrieved,
Became unkind with me to punish them.
They said 't was he began deception first,
Nor, in one point whereto he pledged himself,
Kept promise: what of that, suppose it were?
Echoes die off, scarcely reverberate
Forever, — why should ill keep echoing ill,
And never let our ears have done with noise?
Then my poor parents took the violent way
To thwart him, — he must needs retaliate, — wrong,
Wrong, and all wrong, — better say, all blind!
As I myself was, that is sure, who else
Had understood the mystery: for his wife
Was bound in some sort to help somehow there.
It seems as if I might have interposed,

Blunted the edge of their resentment so,
Since he vexed me because they first vexed him;
"I will entreat them to desist, submit,
Give him the money and be poor in peace,—
Certainly not go tell the world: perhaps
He will grow quiet with his gains."
Yes, say
Something to this effect and you do well!
But then you have to see first: I was blind.
That is the fruit of all such wormy ways,
The indirect, the unapproved of God:
You cannot find their author's end and aim,
Not even to substitute your good for bad,
Your straight for the irregular; you stand
Stupefied, profitless, as cow or sheep
That miss a man's mind; anger him just twice
By trial at repairing the first fault.
Thus, when he blamed me, "You are a coquette,
A lure-owl posturing to attract birds,
You look love-lures at theatre and church,
In walk, at window!"—that, I knew, was false:
But why he charged me falsely, whither sought
To drive me by such charge,—how could I know?
So, unaware, I only made things worse.
I tried to soothe him by abjuring walk,
Window, church, theatre, for good and all,
As if he had been in earnest: that, you know,
Was nothing like the object of his charge.
Yes, when I got my maid to supplicate
The priest, whose name she read when she would read
Those feigned false letters I was forced to hear
Though I could hear no word of,—he should cease
Writing,—nay, if he minded prayer of mine,
Cease from so much as even pass the street
Whereon our house looked,—in my ignorance
I was just thwarting Guido's true intent;
Which was, to bring about a wicked change
Of sport to earnest, tempt a thoughtless man
To write indeed, and pass the house, and more,
Till both of us were taken in a crime.
He ought not to have wished me thus act lies,
Simulate folly: but—wrong or right, the wish—
I failed to apprehend its drift. How plain
It follows,—if I fell into such fault,
He also may have overreached the mark,
Made mistake, by perversity of brain,
I' the whole sad strange plot, the grotesque intrigue
To make me and my friend unself ourselves,
Be other man and woman than we were!
Think it out, you who have the time! for me,—
I cannot say less; more I will not say.
Leave it to God to cover and undo!
Only, my dulness should not prove too much!
—Not prove that in a certain other point
Wherein my husband blamed me,—and you blame,
If I interpret smiles and shakes of head,—
I was dull too. Oh, if I dared but speak!
Must I speak? I am blamed that I forwent
A way to make my husband's favor come.
That is true: I was firm, withstood, refused . . .
—Women as you are, how can I find the words?

I felt there was just one thing Guido claimed
I had no right to give nor he to take;
We being in estrangement, soul from soul:
Till, when I sought help, the Archbishop smiled,
Inquiring into privacies of life,
—Said I was blamable—(he stands for God)
Nowise entitled to exemption there.
Then I obeyed,—as surely had obeyed
Were the injunction "Since your husband bids,
Swallow the burning coal he proffers you!"
But I did wrong, and he gave wrong advice
Though he were thrice Archbishop,—that, I know!—
Now I have got to die and see things clear.
Remember I was barely twelve years old—
A child at marriage: I was let alone
For weeks, I told you, lived my child-life still
Even at Arezzo, when I woke and found
First . . . but I need not think of that again—

Over and ended! Try and take the sense
Of what I signify, if it must be so.
After the first, my husband, for hate's sake,
Said one eve, when the simpler cruelty
Seemed somewhat dull at edge and fit to bear,
"We have been man and wife six months almost:
How long is this your comedy to last?
Go this night to my chamber, not your own!"
At which word, I did rush — most true the charge —
And gain the Archbishop's house — he stands for God —
And fall upon my knees and clasp his feet,
Praying him hinder what my estranged soul
Refused to bear, though patient of the rest:
"Place me within a convent," I implored —
"Let me henceforward lead the virgin life
You praise in her you bid me imitate!"
What did he answer? "Folly of ignorance!
Know, daughter, circumstances make or mar
Virginity, — 't is virtue or 't is vice.
That which was glory in the Mother of God
Had been, for instance, damnable in Eve
Created to be mother of mankind.
Had Eve, in answer to her Maker's speech
'Be fruitful, multiply, replenish earth' —
Pouted 'But I choose rather to remain
Single' — why, she had spared herself forthwith
Further probation by the apple and snake,
Been pushed straight out of Paradise! For see —
If motherhood be qualified impure,
I catch you making God command Eve sin!
— A blasphemy so like these Molinists',
I must suspect you dip into their books."
Then he pursued "'T was in your covenant!"

No! There my husband never used deceit.
He never did by speech nor act imply
"Because of our souls' yearning that we meet
And mix in soul through flesh, which yours and mine
Wear and impress, and make their visible selves,
— All which means, for the love of you and me,
Let us become one flesh, being one soul!"
He only stipulated for the wealth;
Honest so far. But when he spoke as plain —
Dreadfully honest also — "Since our souls
Stand each from each, a whole world's width between,
Give me the fleshly vesture I can reach
And rend and leave just fit for hell to burn!" —
Why, in God's name, for Guido's soul's own sake
Imperilled by polluting mine, — I say,
I did resist; would I had overcome!

My heart died out at the Archbishop's smile;
— It seemed so stale and worn a way o' the world,
As though 't were nature frowning — "Here is Spring,
The sun shines as he shone at Adam's fall,
The earth requires that warmth reach everywhere:
What, must your patch of snow be saved forsooth
Because you rather fancy snow than flowers?"
Something in this style he began with me.
Last he said, savagely for a good man,
"This explains why you call your husband harsh,
Harsh to you, harsh to whom you love. God's Bread!
The poor Count has to manage a mere child
Whose parents leave untaught the simplest things
Their duty was and privilege to teach, —
Goodwives' instruction, gossips' lore: they laugh
And leave the Count the task, — or leave it me!"
Then I resolved to tell a frightful thing.
"I am not ignorant, — know what I say,
Declaring this is sought for hate, not love.
Sir, you may hear things like almighty God.
I tell you that my housemate, yes — the priest
My husband's brother, Canon Girolamo —
Has taught me what depraved and misnamed love
Means, and what outward signs denote the sin,
For he solicits me and says he loves,

The idle young priest with naught else to do.
My husband sees this, knows this, and lets be.
Is it your counsel I bear this beside ?"
"— More scandal, and against a priest this time !
What, 't is the Canon now ?" — less snappishly —
"Rise up, my child, for such a child you are,
The rod were too advanced a punishment!
Let 's try the honeyed cake. A parable!
'Without a parable spake he not to them.'
There was a ripe round long black toothsome fruit,
Even a flower-fig, the prime boast of May;
And, to the tree, said . . . either the spirit o' the fig,
Or, if we bring in men, the gardener,
Archbishop of the orchard — had I time
To try o' the two which fits in best: indeed
It might be the Creator's self, but then
The tree should bear an apple, I suppose, —
Well, anyhow, one with authority said,
'Ripe fig, burst skin, regale the figpecker —
The bird whereof thou art a perquisite !'
'Nay,' with a flounce, replied the restif fig,
'I much prefer to keep my pulp myself:
He may go breakfastless and dinnerless,
Supperless of one crimson seed, for me!'
So, back she flopped into her bunch of leaves.
He flew off, left her, — did the natural Lord, —
And lo, three hundred thousand bees and wasps
Found her out, feasted on her to the shuck:
Such gain the fig's that gave its bird no bite!
The moral, — fools elude their proper lot,
Tempt other fools, get ruined all alike.
Therefore go home, embrace your husband quick!
Which if his Canon brother chance to see,
He will the sooner back to book again."

So, home I did go; so, the worst befell:
So, I had proof the Archbishop was just man,
And hardly that, and certainly no more.
For, miserable consequence to me,
My husband's hatred waxed nor waned at all
His brother's boldness grew effrontery soon,
And my last stay and comfort in myself
Was forced from me: henceforth I looked to God
Only, nor cared my desecrated soul
Should have fair walls, gay windows for the world.
God's glimmer, that came through the ruin-top,
Was witness why all lights were quenched inside:
Henceforth I asked God counsel, not mankind.

So, when I made the effort, freed myself,
They said — "No care to save appearance here!
How cynic, — when, how wanton, were enough!"
— Adding, it all came of my mother's life —
My own real mother, whom I never knew,
Who did wrong (if she needs must have done wrong)
Through being all her life, not my four years,
At mercy of the hateful: every beast
O' the field was wont to break that fountain-fence,
Trample the silver into mud so murk
Heaven could not find itself reflected there.
Now they cry, "Out on her, who, plashy pool,
Bequeathed turbidity and bitterness
To the daughter stream where Guido dipt and drank!"

Well, since she had to bear this brand — let me!
The rather do I understand her now, —
From my experience of what hate calls love, —
Much love might be in what their love called hate.
If she sold . . . what they call, sold . . . me, her child —
I shall believe she hoped in her poor heart
That I at least might try be good and pure,
Begin to live untempted, not go doomed
And done with ere once found in fault, as she.

Oh and, my mother, it all came to this?
Why should I trust those that speak ill of you,
When I mistrust who speaks even well of them?
Why, since all bound to do me good, did harm,
May not you, seeming as you harmed me most,
Have meant to do most good — and feed your child
From bramble-bush, whom not one orchard-tree
But drew bough back from, nor let one fruit fall?
This it was for you sacrificed your babe?
Gained just this, giving your heart's hope away
As I might give mine, loving it as you,
If . . . but that never could be asked of me!

There, enough! I have my support again,
Again the knowledge that my babe was, is,
Will be mine only. Him, by death, I give
Outright to God, without a further care, —
But not to any parent in the world, —
So to be safe: why is it we repine?
What guardianship were safer could we choose?
All human plans and projects come to naught:
My life, and what I know of other lives,
Prove that: no plan nor project! God shall care!

And now you are not tired? How patient then
All of you, — oh yes, patient this long while
Listening, and understanding, I am sure!
Four days ago, when I was sound and well
And like to live, no one would understand.
People were kind, but smiled, "And what of him,
Your friend, whose tonsure the rich dark-brown hides?
There, there! — your lover, do we dream he was?
A priest too — never were such naughtiness!
Still, he thinks many a long think, never fear,
After the shy pale lady, — lay so light
For a moment in his arms, the lucky one!"
And so on: wherefore should I blame you much?
So we are made, such difference in minds,
Such difference too in eyes that see the minds!
That man, you misinterpret and misprise —
The glory of his nature, I had thought,
Shot itself out in white light, blazed the truth
Through every atom of his act with me:
Yet where I point you, through the crystal shrine,
Purity in quintessence, one dew-drop,
You all descry a spider in the midst.
One says, "The head of it is plain to see,"
And one, "They are the feet by which I judge,"
All say, "Those films were spun by nothing else."

Then, I must lay my babe away with God,
Nor think of him again for gratitude.
Yes, my last breath shall wholly spend itself
In one attempt more to disperse the stain,
The mist from other breath fond mouths have made,
About a lustrous and pellucid soul:
So that, when I am gone but sorrow stays,
And people need assurance in their doubt
If God yet have a servant, man a friend,
The weak a savior, and the vile a foe, —
Let him be present, by the name invoked,
Giuseppe-Maria Caponsacchi!

There,
Strength comes already with the utterance!
I will remember once more for his sake
The sorrow: for he lives and is belied.
Could he be here, how he would speak for me!

I had been miserable three drear years
In that dread palace and lay passive now,
When I first learned there could be such a man.
Thus it fell: I was at a public play,
In the last days of Carnival last March,
Brought there I knew not why, but now know well.
My husband put me where I sat, in front;
Then crouched down, breathed cold through me from behind,
Stationed i' the shadow, — none in front could see, —

I, it was, faced the stranger-throng beneath,
The crowd with upturned faces, eyes one stare,
Voices one buzz. I looked but to the stage,
Whereon two lovers sang and interchanged
"True life is only love, love only bliss:
I love thee — thee I love!" then they embraced.
I looked thence to the ceiling and the walls, —
Over the crowd, those voices and those eyes, —
My thoughts went through the roof and out, to Rome
On wings of music, waft of measured words, —
Set me down there, a happy child again,
Sure that to-morrow would be festa-day,
Hearing my parents praise past festas more,
And seeing they were old if I was young.
Yet wondering why they still would end discourse
With "We must soon go, you abide your time,
And, — might we haply see the proper friend
Throw his arm over you and make you safe!"

Sudden I saw him; into my lap there fell
A foolish twist of comfits, broke my dream
And brought me from the air and laid me low,
As ruined as the soaring bee that 's reached
(So Pietro told me at the Villa once)
By the dust-handful. There the comfits lay:
I looked to see who flung them, and I faced
This Caponsacchi, looking up in turn.
Ere I could reason out why, I felt sure,
Whoever flung them, his was not the hand, —
Up rose the round face and good-natured grin
Of one who, in effect, had played the prank,
From covert close beside the earnest face, —
Fat waggish Conti, friend of all the world.
He was my husband's cousin, privileged
To throw the thing: the other, silent, grave,
Solemn almost, saw me, as I saw him.

There is a psalm Don Celestine recites,
"Had I a dove's wings, how I fain would flee!"
The psalm runs not "I hope, I pray for wings," —
Not "If wings fall from heaven, I fix them fast," —
Simply "How good it were to fly and rest,
Have hope now, and one day expect content!
How well to do what I shall never do!"
So I said, "Had there been a man like that,
To lift me with his strength out of all strife
Into the calm, how I could fly and rest!
I have a keeper in the garden here
Whose sole employment is to strike me low
If ever I, for solace, seek the sun.
Life means with me successful feigning death,
Lying stone-like, eluding notice so,
Foregoing here the turf and there the sky.
Suppose that man had been instead of this!"

Presently Conti laughed into my ear,
— Had tripped up to the raised place where I sat —
"Cousin, I flung them brutishly and hard!
Because you must be hurt, to look austere
As Caponsacchi yonder, my tall friend
A-gazing now. Ah, Guido, you so close?
Keep on your knees, do! Beg her to forgive!
My cornet battered like a cannon-ball.
Good-by, I 'm gone!" — nor waited the reply.

That night at supper, out my husband broke,
"Why was that throwing, that buffoonery?
Do you think I am your dupe? What man would dare
Throw comfits in a stranger lady's lap?
'T was knowledge of you bred such insolence
In Caponsacchi; he dared shoot the bolt,
Using that Conti for his stalking-horse.
How could you see him this once and no more,
When he is always haunting hereabout
At the street-corner or the palace-side,
Publishing my shame and your impudence?
You are a wanton, — I a dupe, you think?
O Christ, what hinders that I kill her quick?"
Whereat he drew his sword and feigned a thrust.

All this, now, — being not so strange to me,
Used to such misconception day by day
And broken-in to bear, — I bore, this time.
More quietly than woman should perhaps;
Repeated the mere truth and held my tongue.

Then he said, "Since you play the ignorant,
I shall instruct you. This amour, — commenced
Or finished or midway in act, all 's one, —
'T is the town-talk; so my revenge shall be.
Does he presume because he is a priest?
I warn him that the sword I wear shall pink
His lily-scented cassock through and through,
Next time I catch him underneath your eaves!"
But he had threatened with the sword so oft
And, after all, not kept his promise. All
I said was, "Let God save the innocent!
Moreover, death is far from a bad fate.
I shall go pray for you and me, not him;
And then I look to sleep, come death or, worse,
Life." So, I slept.

There may have elapsed a week,
When Margherita, — called my waiting-maid,
Whom it is said my husband found too fair —
Who stood and heard the charge and the reply,
Who never once would let the matter rest
From that night forward, but rang changes still
On this the thrust and that the shame, and how
Good cause for jealousy cures jealous fools,
And what a paragon was this same priest
She talked about until I stopped my ears, —
She said, "A week is gone; you comb your hair,
Then go mope in a corner, cheek on palm,
Till night comes round again, — so, waste a week
As if your husband menaced you in sport.
Have not I some acquaintance with his tricks?
Oh no, he did not stab the serving-man
Who made and sang the rhymes about me once!
For why? They sent him to the wars next day.
Nor poisoned he the foreigner, my friend,
Who wagered on the whiteness of my breast, —
The swarth skins of our city in dispute:
For, though he paid me proper compliment,
The Count well knew he was besotted with
Somebody else, a skin as black as ink,
(As all the town knew save my foreigner) —
He found and wedded presently, — 'Why need
Better revenge?' — the Count asked. But what 's here?
A priest that does not fight, and cannot wed,
Yet must be dealt with! If the Count took fire
For the poor pastime of a minute, — me —
What were the conflagration for yourself,
Countess and lady wife and all the rest?
The priest will perish; you will grieve too late:
So shall the city-ladies' handsomest
Frankest and liberalest gentleman
Die for you, to appease a scurvy dog
Hanging 's too good for. Is there no escape?
Were it not simple Christian charity
To warn the priest be on his guard, — save him
Assured death, save yourself from causing it?
I meet him in the street. Give me a glove,
A ring to show for token! Mum 's the word!"
I answered, "If you were, as styled, my maid,
I would command you: as you are, you say,
My husband's intimate, — assist his wife
Who can do nothing but entreat 'Be still!'
Even if you speak truth and a crime is planned,
Leave help to God as I am forced to do!
There is no other help, or we should craze,
Seeing such evil with no human cure.
Reflect that God, who makes the storm desist,
Can make an angry violent heart subside.
Why should we venture teach him governance?
Never address me on this subject more!"

Next night she said, 'But I went, all the same,
— Ay, saw your Caponsacchi in his house,

And come back stuffed with news I must outpour.
I told him, 'Sir, my mistress is a stone:
Why should you harm her for no good you get?
For you do harm her — prowl about our place
With the Count never distant half the street,
Lurking at every corner, would you look!
'T is certain she has witched you with a spell.
Are there not other beauties at your beck?
We all know, Donna This and Monna That
Die for a glance of yours, yet here you gaze!
Go make them grateful, leave the stone its cold!'
And he — oh, he turned first white and then red,
And then — 'To her behest I bow myself,
Whom I love with my body and my soul:
Only a word i' the bowing! See, I write
One little word, no harm to see or hear!
Then, fear no further!' This is what he wrote.
I know you cannot read, — therefore, let me!
'*My idol!*'" . . .

But I took it from her hand
And tore it into shreds. "Why, join the rest
Who harm me? Have I ever done you wrong?
People have told me 't is you wrong myself:
Let it suffice I either feel no wrong
Or else forgive it, — yet you turn my foe!
The others hunt me and you throw a noose!"

She muttered, "Have your wilful way!" I slept.

Whereupon . . . no, I leave my husband out!
It is not to do him more hurt, I speak.
Let it suffice, when misery was most,
One day, I swooned and got a respite so.
She stooped as I was slowly coming to,
This Margherita, ever on my trace,
And whispered — "Caponsacchi!"

If I drowned,
But woke afloat i' the wave with upturned eyes,
And found their first sight was a star! I turned —
For the first time, I let her have her will,
Heard passively, — "The imposthume at such head,
One touch, one lancet-puncture would relieve, —
And still no glance the good physician's way
Who rids you of the torment in a trice!
Still he writes letters you refuse to hear.
He may prevent your husband, kill himself,
So desperate and all fordone is he!
Just hear the pretty verse he made to-day!
A sonnet from Mirtillo. '*Peerless fair. . . .*'
All poetry is difficult to read,
— The sense of it is, anyhow, he seeks
Leave to contrive you an escape from hell,
And for that purpose asks an interview.
I can write, I can grant it in your name,
Or, what is better, lead you to his house.
Your husband dashes you against the stones;
This man would place each fragment in a shrine:
You hate him, love your husband!"

I returned,
"It is not true I love my husband, — no,
Nor hate this man. I listen while you speak,
— Assured that what you say is false, the same:
Much as when once, to me a little child,
A rough gaunt man in rags, with eyes on fire,
A crowd of boys and idlers at his heels,
Rushed as I crossed the Square, and held my head
In his two hands, 'Here 's she will let me speak!
You little girl, whose eyes do good to mine,
I am the Pope, am Sextus, now the Sixth;
And that Twelfth Innocent, proclaimed to-day,
Is Lucifer disguised in human flesh!
The angels, met in conclave, crowned me!' — thus
He gibbered and I listened; but I knew
All was delusion, ere folk interposed,
'Unfasten him, the maniac!' Thus I know
All your report of Caponsacchi false,
Folly or dreaming: I have seen so much
By that adventure at the spectacle,
The face I fronted that one first, last time:

He would belie it by such words and thoughts.
Therefore while you profess to show him me
I ever see his own face. Get you gone!"

"— That will I, nor once open mouth again, —
No, by Saint Joseph and the Holy Ghost!
On your head be the damage, so adieu!"

And so more days, more deeds I must forget,
Till . . . what a strange thing now is to declare!
Since I say anything, say all if true!
And how my life seems lengthened as to serve!
It may be idle or inopportune,
But, true? — why, what was all I said but truth,
Even when I found that such as are untrue
Could only take the truth in through a lie?
Now — I am speaking truth to the Truth's self:
God will lend credit to my words this time.

It had got half through April. I arose
One vivid daybreak, — who had gone to bed
In the old way my wont those last three years,
Careless until, the cup drained, I should die.
The last sound in my ear, the over-night,
Had been a something let drop on the sly
In prattle by Margherita, "Soon enough
Gayeties end, now Easter's past: a week,
And the Archbishop gets him back to Rome, —
Every one leaves the town for Rome, this Spring, —
Even Caponsacchi, out of heart and hope,
Resigns himself and follows with the flock."
I heard this drop and drop like rain outside
Fast-falling through the darkness while she spoke:
So had I heard with like indifference,
"And Michael's pair of wings will arrive first
At Rome, to introduce the company,
And bear him from our picture where he fights
Satan, — expect to have that dragon loose
And never a defender!" — my sole thought
Being still, as night came, "Done, another day!
How good to sleep and so get nearer death!" —
When, what, first thing at daybreak, pierced the sleep
With a summons to me? Up I sprang alive,
Light in me, light without me, everywhere
Change! A broad yellow sunbeam was let fall
From heaven to earth, — a sudden drawbridge lay,
Along which marched a myriad merry motes,
Mocking the flies that crossed them and recrossed
In rival dance, companions new-born too.
On the house-eaves, a dripping shag of weed
Shook diamonds on each dull gray lattice-square,
As first one, then another bird leapt by,
And light was off, and lo was back again,
Always with one voice, — where are two such joys? —
The blessed building-sparrow! I stepped forth,
Stood on the terrace, — o'er the roofs, such sky!
My heart sang, "I too am to go away,
I too have something I must care about,
Carry away with me to Rome, to Rome!
The bird brings hither sticks and hairs and wool,
And nowhere else i' the world; what fly breaks rank,
Falls out of the procession that befits,
From window here to window there, with all
The world to choose, — so well he knows his course?
I have my purpose and my motive too,
My march to Rome, like any bird or fly!
Had I been dead! How right to be alive!
Last night I almost prayed for leave to die,
Wished Guido all his pleasure with the sword
Or the poison, — poison, sword, was but a trick,
Harmless, may God forgive him the poor jest!
My life is charmed, will last till I reach Rome!
Yesterday, but for the sin, — ah, nameless be
The deed I could have dared against myself!

Now — see if I will touch an unripe fruit,
And risk the health I want to have and use!
Not to live, now, would be the wickedness, —
For life means to make haste and go to Rome
And leave Arezzo, leave all woes at once!"

Now, understand here, by no means mistake!
Long ago had I tried to leave that house
When it seemed such procedure would stop sin;
And still failed more the more I tried — at first
The Archbishop, as I told you, — next, our lord
The Governor, — indeed I found my way,
I went to the great palace where he rules,
Though I knew well 't was he who, — when I gave
A jewel or two, themselves had given me,
Back to my parents, — since they wanted bread,
They who had never let me want a nosegay, — he
Spoke of the jail for felons, if they kept
What was first theirs, then mine, so doubly theirs,
Though all the while my husband's most of all!
I knew well who had spoke the word wrought this:
Yet, being in extremity, I fled
To the Governor, as I say, — scarce opened lip
When — the cold cruel snicker close behind —
Guido was on my trace, already there,
Exchanging nod and wink for shrug and smile,
And I — pushed back to him and, for my pains,
Paid with . . . but why remember what is past?
I sought out a poor friar the people call
The Roman, and confessed my sin which came
Of their sin, — that fact could not be repressed, —
The frightfulness of my despair in God:
And feeling, through the grate, his horror shake,
Implored him, "Write for me who cannot write,
Apprise my parents, make them rescue me!
You bid me be courageous and trust God:
Do you in turn dare somewhat, trust and write,
'Dear friends, who used to be my parents once,
And now declare you have no part in me,
This is some riddle I want wit to solve,
Since you must love me with no difference.
Even suppose you altered, — there's your hate,
To ask for: hate of you two dearest ones
I shall find liker love than love found here,
If husbands love their wives. Take me away
And hate me as you do the gnats and fleas,
Even the scorpions! How I shall rejoice!'
Write that and save me!" And he promised — wrote
Or did not write; things never changed at all:
He was not like the Augustinian here!
Last, in a desperation I appealed
To friends, who ever wished me better days,
To Guillichini, that 's of kin, — "What, I — Travel to Rome with you? A flying gout
Bids me deny my heart and mind my leg!"
Then I tried Conti, used to brave — laugh back
The louring thunder when his cousin scowled
At me protected by his presence: "You —
Who well know what you cannot save me from, —
Carry me off! What frightens you, a priest?"
He shook his head, looked grave — "Above my strength!
Guido has claws that scratch, shows feline teeth;
A formidabler foe than I dare fret:
Give me a dog to deal with, twice the size!
Of course I am a priest and Canon too,
But . . . by the bye . . . though both, not quite so bold
As he, my fellow-Canon, brother-priest,
The personage in such ill odor here
Because of the reports — pure birth o' the brain!
Our Caponsacchi, he 's your true Saint George
To slay the monster, set the Princess free,
And have the whole High-Altar to himself:

I always think so when I see that piece
I' the Pieve, that's his church and mine, you know:
Though you drop eyes at mention of his name!"

That name had got to take a half-grotesque,
Half-ominous, wholly enigmatic sense,
Like any by-word, broken bit of song
Born with a meaning, changed by mouth and mouth
That mix it in a sneer or smile, as chance
Bids, till it now means naught but ugliness
And perhaps shame.

— All this intends to say,
That, over-night, the notion of escape
Had seemed distemper, dreaming; and the name, —
Not the man, but the name of him, thus made
Into a mockery and disgrace, — why, she
Who uttered it persistently, had laughed,
"I name his name, and there you start and wince
As criminal from the red tongs' touch!" — yet now,
Now, as I stood letting morn bathe me bright,
Choosing which butterfly should bear my news, —
The white, the brown one, or that tinier blue, —
The Margherita, I detested so,
In she came — "The fine day, the good Spring time!
What, up and out at window? That is best.
No thought of Caponsacchi? — who stood there
All night on one leg, like the sentry crane,
Under the pelting of your water-spout —
Looked last look at your lattice ere he leave
Our city, bury his dead hope at Rome.
Ay, go to looking-glass and make you fine,
While he may die ere touch one least loose hair
You drag at with the comb in such a rage!"

I turned — "Tell Caponsacchi he may come!"
"Tell him to come? Ah, but, for charity,
A truce to fooling! Come? What, — come this eve?
Peter and Paul! But I see through the trick!
Yes, come, and take a flower-pot on his head,
Flung from your terrace! No joke, sincere truth?"

How plainly I perceived hell flash and fade
O' the face of her, — the doubt that first paled joy,
Then, final reassurance I indeed
Was caught now, never to be free again!
What did I care? — who felt myself of force
To play with silk, and spurn the horsehair-springe.

"But — do you know that I have bade him come,
And in your own name? I presumed so much,
Knowing the thing you needed in your heart.
But somehow — what had I to show in proof?
He would not come: half-promised, that was all,
And wrote the letters you refused to read.
What is the message that shall move him now?"

"After the Ave Maria, at first dark,
I will be standing on the terrace, say!"

"I would I had a good long lock of hair
Should prove I was not lying! Never mind!"

Off she went — "May he not refuse, that 's all —
Fearing a trick!"

I answered, "He will come."
And, all day, I sent prayer like incense up
To God the strong, God the beneficent,
God ever mindful in all strife and strait,
Who, for our own good, makes the need extreme,
Till at the last he puts forth might and saves.
An old rhyme came into my head and rang
Of how a virgin, for the faith of God,

Hid herself, from the Paynims that pursued,
In a cave's heart; until a thunderstone,
Wrapped in a flame, revealed the couch and prey:
And they laughed — "Thanks to lightning, ours at last!"
And she cried, "Wrath of God, assert his love!
Servant of God, thou fire, befriend his child!"
And lo, the fire she grasped at, fixed its flash,
Lay in her hand a calm cold dreadful sword
She brandished till pursuers strewed the ground,
So did the souls within them die away,
As o'er the prostrate bodies, sworded, safe,
She walked forth to the solitudes and Christ:
So should I grasp the lightning and be saved!

And still, as the day wore, the trouble grew
Whereby I guessed there would be born a star,
Until at an intense throe of the dusk,
I started up, was pushed, I dare to say,
Out on the terrace, leaned and looked at last
Where the deliverer waited me: the same
Silent and solemn face, I first descried
At the spectacle, confronted mine once more.

So was that minute twice vouchsafed me, so
The manhood, wasted then, was still at watch
To save me yet a second time: no change
Here, though all else changed in the changing world!

I spoke on the instant, as my duty bade,
In some such sense as this, whatever the phrase.

"Friend, foolish words were borne from you to me;
Your soul behind them is the pure strong wind,
Not dust and feathers which its breath may bear:
These to the witless seem the wind itself,
Since proving thus the first of it they feel.
If by mischance you blew offence my way,
The straws are dropt, the wind desists no whit,
And how such strays were caught up in the street
And took a motion from you, why inquire?
I speak to the strong soul, no weak disguise.
If it be truth, — why should I doubt it truth? —
You serve God specially, as priests are bound,
And care about me, stranger as I am,
So far as wish my good, that — miracle
I take to imitate he wills you serve
By saving me, — what else can he direct?
Here is the service. Since a long while now,
I am in course of being put to death:
While death concerned nothing but me, I bowed
The head and bade, in heart, my husband strike.
Now I imperil something more, it seems,
Something that 's trulier me than this myself,
Something I trust in God and you to save.
You go to Rome, they tell me: take me there,
Put me back with my people!"

He replied —
The first word I heard ever from his lips,
All himself in it, — an eternity
Of speech, to match the immeasurable depth
O' the soul that then broke silence — "I am yours."

So did the star rise, soon to lead my step,
Lead on, nor pause before it should stand still
Above the House o' the Babe, — my babe to be,
That knew me first and thus made me know him,
That had his right of life and claim on mine,
And would not let me die till he was born,
But pricked me at the heart to save us both,
Saying, "Have you the will? Leave God the way!"
And the way was Caponsacchi — "mine," thank God!
He was mine, he is mine, he will be mine.

No pause i' the leading and the light! I know,

Next night there was a cloud came, and not
he:
But I prayed through the darkness till it
broke
And let him shine. The second night, he
came.

"The plan is rash; the project desper-
ate:
In such a flight needs must I risk your life,
Give food for falsehood, folly or mistake,
Ground for your husband's rancor and re-
venge" —
So he began again, with the same face.
I felt that, the same loyalty — one star
Turning now red that was so white be-
fore —
One service apprehended newly: just
A word of mine and there the white was
back!

"No, friend, for you will take me! 'T is
yourself
Risk all, not I, — who let you, for I trust
In the compensating great God: enough!
I know you: when is it that you will
come?"

"To-morrow at the day's dawn." Then I
heard
What I should do: how to prepare for
flight
And where to fly.

That night my husband bade
"— You, whom I loathe, beware you break
my sleep
This whole night! Couch beside me like
the corpse
I would you were!" The rest you know, I
think —
How I found Caponsacchi and escaped.

And this man, men call sinner? Jesus
Christ!
Of whom men said, with mouths Thyself
mad'st once,
"He hath a devil" — say he was Thy saint,
My Caponsacchi! Shield and show — un-
shroud
In Thine own time the glory of the soul
If aught obscure, — if ink-spot, from vile
pens
Scribbling a charge against him — (I was
glad
Then, for the first time, that I could not
write) —
Flirted his way, have flecked the blaze!

For me,
'T is otherwise: let men take, sift my
thoughts
— Thoughts I throw like the flax for sun
to bleach!
I did pray, do pray, in the prayer shall die,
"Oh, to have Caponsacchi for my guide!"
Ever the face upturned to mine, the hand
Holding my hand across the world, — a
sense
That reads, as only such can read, the mark
God sets on woman, signifying so
She should — shall peradventure — be di-
vine;
Yet 'ware, the while, how weakness mars
the print
And makes confusion, leaves the thing men
see,
— Not this man sees, — who from his soul,
rewrites
The obliterated charter,— love and strength
Mending what 's marred. "So kneels a
votarist,
Weeds some poor waste traditionary plot
Where shrine once was, where temple yet
may be,
Purging the place but worshipping the
while,
By faith and not by sight, sight clearest
so, —
Such way the saints work," — says Don
Celestine.
But I, not privileged to see a saint
Of old when such walked earth with crown
and palm,
If I call "saint" what saints call something
else —
The saints must bear with me, impute the
fault
To a soul i' the bud, so starved by igno-
rance,
Stinted of warmth, it will not blow this year
Nor recognize the orb which Spring-flowers
know.
But if meanwhile some insect with a heart
Worth floods of lazy music, spendthrift
joy —
Some fire-fly renounced Spring for my
dwarfed cup,
Crept close to me, brought lustre for the
dark,

Comfort against the cold, — what though excess
Of comfort should miscall the creature — sun?
What did the sun to hinder while harsh hands
Petal by petal, crude and colorless,
Tore me? This one heart gave me all the Spring!

Is all told? There 's the journey: and where 's time
To tell you how that heart burst out in shine?
Yet certain points do press on me too hard.
Each place must have a name, though I forget:
How strange it was — there where the plain begins
And the small river mitigates its flow —
When eve was fading fast, and my soul sank,
And he divined what surge of bitterness,
In overtaking me, would float me back
Whence I was carried by the striding day —
So, — "This gray place was famous once," said he —
And he began that legend of the place
As if in answer to the unspoken fear,
And told me all about a brave man dead,
Which lifted me and let my soul go on!
How did he know too — at that town's approach
By the rock-side — that in coming near the signs
Of life, the house-roofs and the church and tower,
I saw the old boundary and wall o' the world
Rise plain as ever round me, hard and cold,
As if the broken circlet joined again,
Tightened itself about me with no break, —
As if the town would turn Arezzo's self, —
The husband there, — the friends my enemies,
All ranged against me, not an avenue
To try, but would be blocked and drive me back
On him, — this other, . . . oh the heart in that!
Did not he find, bring, put into my arms
A new-born babe? — and I saw faces beam
Of the young mother proud to teach me joy,
And gossips round expecting my surprise
At the sudden hole through earth that lets in heaven.
I could believe himself by his strong will
Had woven around me what I thought the world
We went along in, every circumstance,
Towns, flowers and faces, all things helped so well!
For, through the journey, was it natural
Such comfort should arise from first to last?
As I look back, all is one milky way;
Still bettered more, the more remembered, so
Do new stars bud while I but search for old,
And fill all gaps i' the glory, and grow him —
Him I now see make the shine everywhere.
Even at the last when the bewildered flesh,
The cloud of weariness about my soul
Clogging too heavily, sucked down all sense, —
Still its last voice was, "He will watch and care;
Let the strength go, I am content: he stays!"
I doubt not he did stay and care for all —
From that sick minute when the head swam round,
And the eyes looked their last and died on him,
As in his arms he caught me, and, you say,
Carried me in, that tragical red eve,
And laid me where I next returned to life
In the other red of morning, two red plates
That crushed together, crushed the time between,
And are since then a solid fire to me, —
When in, my dreadful husband and the world
Broke, — and I saw him, master, by hell's right,
And saw my angel helplessly held back
By guards that helped the malice — the lamb prone,
The serpent towering and triumphant — then
Came all the strength back in a sudden swell,
I did for once see right, do right, give tongue
The adequate protest: for a worm must turn
If it would have its wrong observed by God.

I did spring up, attempt to thrust aside
That ice-block 'twixt the sun and me, lay low
The neutralizer of all good and truth.
If I sinned so, — never obey voice more
O' the Just and Terrible, who bids us — "Bear!"
Not — "Stand by, bear to see my angels bear!"
I am clear it was on impulse to serve God
Not save myself, — no — nor my child unborn!
Had I else waited patiently till now? —
Who saw my old kind parents, silly-sooth
And too much trustful, for their worst of faults,
Cheated, browbeaten, stripped and starved, cast out
Into the kennel: I remonstrated,
Then sank to silence, for, — their woes at end,
Themselves gone, — only I was left to plague.
If only I was threatened and belied,
What matter? I could bear it and did bear:
It was a comfort, still one lot for all:
They were not persecuted for my sake
And I, estranged, the single happy one.
But when at last, all by myself I stood
Obeying the clear voice which bade me rise,
Not for my own sake but my babe unborn,
And take the angel's hand was sent to help —
And found the old adversary athwart the path —
Not my hand simply struck from the angel's, but
The very angel's self made foul i' the face
By the fiend who struck there, — that I would not bear,
That only I resisted! So, my first
And last resistance was invincible.
Prayers move God; threats, and nothing else, move men!
I must have prayed a man as he were God
When I implored the Governor to right
My parents' wrongs: the answer was a smile.
The Archbishop, — did I clasp his feet enough,
Hide my face hotly on them, while I told
More than I dared make my own mother know?
The profit was — compassion and a jest.
This time, the foolish prayers were done with, right
Used might, and solemnized the sport at once.
All was against the combat: vantage, mine?
The runaway avowed, the accomplice-wife,
In company with the plan-contriving priest?
Yet, shame thus rank and patent, I struck, bare,
At foe from head to foot in magic mail,
And off it withered, cobweb-armory
Against the lightning! 'T was truth singed the lies
And saved me, not the vain sword nor weak speech!

You see, I will not have the service fail!
I say, the angel saved me: I am safe!
Others may want and wish, I wish nor want
One point o' the circle plainer, where I stand
Traced round about with white to front the world.
What of the calumny I came across,
What o' the way to the end? — the end crowns all.
The judges judged aright i' the main, gave me
The uttermost of my heart's desire, a truce
From torture and Arezzo, balm for hurt,
With the quiet nuns, — God recompense the good!
Who said and sang away the ugly past.
And, when my final fortune was revealed,
What safety, while, amid my parents' arms,
My babe was given me! Yes, he saved my babe:
It would not have peeped forth, the bird-like thing,
Through that Arezzo noise and trouble: back
Had it returned nor ever let me see!
But the sweet peace cured all, and let me live
And give my bird the life among the leaves
God meant him! Weeks and months of quietude,
I could lie in such peace and learn so much —
Begin the task, I see how needful now,
Of understanding somewhat of my past, —
Know life a little, I should leave so soon.

Therefore, because this man restored my soul,
All has been right; I have gained my gain, enjoyed
As well as suffered, — nay, got foretaste too
Of better life beginning where this ends —
All through the breathing-while allowed me thus,
Which let good premonitions reach my soul
Unthwarted, and benignant influence flow
And interpenetrate and change my heart,
Uncrossed by what was wicked, — nay, unkind.
For, as the weakness of my time drew nigh,
Nobody did me one disservice more,
Spoke coldly or looked strangely, broke the love
I lay in the arms of, till my boy was born,
Born all in love, with naught to spoil the bliss
A whole long fortnight: in a life like mine
A fortnight filled with bliss is long and much.
All women are not mothers of a boy,
Though they live twice the length of my whole life,
And, as they fancy, happily all the same.
There I lay, then, all my great fortnight long,
As if it would continue, broaden out
Happily more and more, and lead to heaven:
Christmas before me, — was not that a chance?
I never realized God's birth before —
How he grew likest God in being born.
This time I felt like Mary, had my babe
Lying a little on my breast like hers.
So all went on till, just four days ago —
The night and the tap.

Oh, it shall be success
To the whole of our poor family! My friends
. . . Nay, father and mother, — give me back my word!
They have been rudely stripped of life, disgraced
Like children who must needs go clothed too fine,
Carry the garb of Carnival in Lent.
If they too much affected frippery
They have been punished and submit themselves,
Say no word: all is over, they see God
Who will not be extreme to mark their fault
Or he had granted respite: they are safe.

For that most woeful man my husband once,
Who, needing respite, still draws vital breath,
I — pardon him? So far as lies in me,
I give him for his good the life he takes,
Praying the world will therefore acquiesce.
Let him make God amends, — none, none to me
Who thank him rather that, whereas strange fate
Mockingly styled him husband and me wife,
Himself this way at least pronounced divorce,
Blotted the marriage-bond: this blood of mine
Flies forth exultingly at any door,
Washes the parchment white, and thanks the blow.
We shall not meet in this world nor the next,
But where will God be absent? In his face
Is light, but in his shadow healing too:
Let Guido touch the shadow and be healed!
And as my presence was importunate, —
My earthly good, temptation and a snare, —
Nothing about me but drew somehow down
His hate upon me, — somewhat so excused
Therefore, since hate was thus the truth of him, —
May my evanishment forevermore
Help further to relieve the heart that cast
Such object of its natural loathing forth!
So he was made; he nowise made himself:
I could not love him, but his mother did.
His soul has never lain beside my soul;
But for the unresisting body, — thanks!
He burned that garment spotted by the flesh.
Whatever he touched is rightly ruined: plague
It caught, and disinfection it had craved
Still but for Guido; I am saved through him
So as by fire; to him — thanks and farewell!

Even for my babe, my boy, there's safety thence —
From the sudden death of me, I mean: we poor

Weak souls, how we endeavor to be strong!
I was already using up my life, —
This portion, now, should do him such a good,
This other go to keep off such an ill!
The great life; see, a breath and it is gone!
So is detached, so left all by itself
The little life, the fact which means so much.
Shall not God stoop the kindlier to his work,
His marvel of creation, foot would crush,
Now that the hand he trusted to receive
And hold it, lets the treasure fall perforce?
The better; he shall have in orphanage
His own way all the clearlier: if my babe
Outlived the hour — and he has lived two weeks —
It is through God who knows I am not by.
Who is it makes the soft gold hair turn black,
And sets the tongue, might lie so long at rest,
Trying to talk? Let us leave God alone!
Why should I doubt he will explain in time
What I feel now, but fail to find the words?
My babe nor was, nor is, nor yet shall be
Count Guido Franceschini's child at all —
Only his mother's, born of love not hate!
So shall I have my rights in after-time.
It seems absurd, impossible to-day;
So seems so much else, not explained but known!

Ah! Friends, I thank and bless you every one!
No more now: I withdraw from earth and man
To my own soul, compose myself for God.

Well, and there is more! Yes, my end of breath
Shall bear away my soul in being true!
He is still here, not outside with the world,
Here, here, I have him in his rightful place!
'T is now, when I am most upon the move,
I feel for what I verily find — again
The face, again the eyes, again, through all,
The heart and its immeasurable love
Of my one friend, my only, all my own,
Who put his breast between the spears and me.
Ever with Caponsacchi! Otherwise
Here alone would be failure, loss to me —
How much more loss to him, with life debarred
From giving life, love locked from love's display,
The day-star stopped its task that makes night morn!
O lover of my life, O soldier-saint,
No work begun shall ever pause for death!
Love will be helpful to me more and more
I' the coming course, the new path I must tread —
My weak hand in thy strong hand, strong for that!
Tell him that if I seem without him now,
That 's the world's insight! Oh, he understands!
He is at Civita — do I once doubt
The world again is holding us apart?
He had been here, displayed in my behalf
The broad brow that reverberates the truth,
And flashed the word God gave him, back to man!
I know where the free soul is flown! My fate
Will have been hard for even him to bear:
Let it confirm him in the trust of God,
Showing how holily he dared the deed!
And, for the rest, — say, from the deed, no touch
Of harm came, but all good, all happiness,
Not one faint fleck of failure! Why explain?
What I see, oh, he sees and how much more!
Tell him, — I know not wherefore the true word
Should fade and fall unuttered at the last —
It was the name of him I sprang to meet
When came the knock, the summons and the end.
"My great heart, my strong hand are back again!"
I would have sprung to these, beckoning across
Murder and hell gigantic and distinct
O' the threshold, posted to exclude me heaven:
He is ordained to call and I to come!
Do not the dead wear flowers when dressed for God?
Say, — I am all in flowers from head to foot!
Say, — not one flower of all he said and did,
Might seem to flit unnoticed, fade unknown,

But dropped a seed, has grown a balsam-tree
Whereof the blossoming perfumes the place
At this supreme of moments! He is a priest;
He cannot marry therefore, which is right:
I think he would not marry if he could.
Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,
Mere imitation of the inimitable:
In heaven we have the real and true and sure.
'T is there they neither marry nor are given
In marriage but are as the angels: right,
Oh how right that is, how like Jesus Christ
To say that! Marriage-making for the earth,
With gold so much, — birth, power, repute so much,
Or beauty, youth so much, in lack of these!
Be as the angels rather, who, apart,
Know themselves into one, are found at length
Married, but marry never, no, nor give
In marriage; they are man and wife at once
When the true time is: here we have to wait
Not so long neither! Could we by a wish
Have what we will and get the future now,
Would we wish aught done undone in the past?
So, let him wait God's instant men call years;
Meantime hold hard by truth and his great soul,
Do out the duty! Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.

## HERVÉ RIEL

[This ballad was printed first in the *Cornhill Magazine* for March, 1871.]

I

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French, — woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II

'T was the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick — or, quicker still,
Here 's the English can and will!"

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?" laughed they:
"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the 'Formidable' here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 't is ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 't is slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

IV

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here 's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that 's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!"
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V

"Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
— A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate — first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries Hervé Riel:
"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying 's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there 's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this 'Formidable' clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
— Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I 've nothing but my life, — here 's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
"Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
See, safe through shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harbored to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!" — sure as fate,
Up the English come — too late!

VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm:
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
"Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
Out burst all with one accord,
"This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!"
What a shout, and all one word,
"Hervé Riel!"
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still,
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
"Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty 's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point,
what is it but a run? —
Since 't is ask and have, I may —
Since the others go ashore —
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I
call the Belle Aurore!"
That he asked and that he got, — nothing
more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it
befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had
gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight
whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come
to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once
more
Save the squadron, honor France, love thy
wife the Belle Aurore!

## PHEIDIPPIDES

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν.

First I salute this soil of the blessed, river
and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes,
honor to all!
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron,
co-equal in praise
— Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her
of the ægis and spear!
Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised
be your peer,
Now, henceforth and forever, — O latest
to whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens,
leave pasture and flock!
Present to help, potent to save, Pan —
patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see,
I return!
See, 't is myself here standing alive, no
spectre that speaks!
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command
me, Athens and you,
"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach
Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is
She?" Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced: like stubble, some field
which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city: two
days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits
and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but
for "Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute,
water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria — but
Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die — the flower of
Hellas utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta,
the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand
do you stretch o'er destruction's
brink?
How, — when? No care for my limbs! —
there 's lightning in all and some —
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once
lips give it birth!"

O my Athens — Sparta love thee? Did
Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of
envy, mistrust,
Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter
of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast
for excuses. I stood
Quivering, — the limbs of me fretting as
fire frets, an inch from dry
wood:
"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and
still they debate?

Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them 'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!
"Has Persia come, — does Athens ask aid, — may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment suspend."

Athens, — except for that sparkle, — thy name, I had mouldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,
— Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet "O gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay, — I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!
Rather I hail thee, Parnes, — trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? at least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:
"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?
Athens to aid? Though the dive were through Erebos, thus I obey —
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!" — when — ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof:
All the great god was good in the eyes grave-kindly — the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
"Halt, Pheidippides!" — halt I did, my brain of a whirl:
"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious began:
"How is it, — Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?
Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The Goat-God saith:
When Persia — so much as strews not the soil — is cast in the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!'

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place, be the pledge!'"
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear

— Fennel — I grasped it a-tremble with dew — whatever it bode)
"While, as for thee" . . . But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto —
Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens — earth no more, the air was my road:
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed, — what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway, — Athens the mother demands of her son!"
Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance — "Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow, —
Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away forever; and then, — no Athens to save, —
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave, —
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees, — recount how the God was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding him — so!"

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still "Rejoice!" — his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
So is Pheidippides happy for ever, — the noble strong man
Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be mute:
"Athens is saved!" — Pheidippides dies in the shout for his mead.

## CLIVE

Browning had this story from Mrs. Jameson as early as 1846, she in turn having just heard Macaulay tell it. Browning's own narrative preceded Clive's death by a week only.

I AND Clive were friends — and why not? Friends! I think you laugh, my lad.
Clive it was gave England India, while your father gives — egad,
England nothing but the graceless boy who lures him on to speak —
"Well, Sir, you and Clive were comrades —" with a tongue thrust in your cheek!
Very true: in my eyes, your eyes, all the world's eyes, Clive was man,
I was, am, and ever shall be — mouse, nay, mouse of all its clan
Sorriest sample, if you take the kitchen's estimate for fame;
While the man Clive — he fought Plassy spoiled the clever foreign game,
Conquered and annexed and Englished!

Never mind! As o'er my punch
(You away) I sit of evenings, — silence, save for biscuit crunch,

Black, unbroken, — thought grows busy
thrids each pathway of old years,
Notes this forthright, that meander, till the
long-past life appears
Like an outspread map of country plodded
through, each mile and rood,
Once, and well remembered still, — I 'm
startled in my solitude
Ever and anon by — what 's the sudden
mocking light that breaks
On me as I slap the table till no rummer-
glass but shakes
While I ask — aloud, I do believe, God
help me! — " Was it thus ?
Can it be that so I faltered, stopped when
just one step for us — "
(Us, — you were not born, I grant, but
surely some day born would be)
" — One bold step had gained a province "
(figurative talk, you see)
" Got no end of wealth and honor, — yet I
stood stock-still no less ? "
— " For I was not Clive," you comment:
but it needs no Clive to guess
Wealth were handy, honor ticklish, did no
writing on the wall
Warn me " Trespasser, 'ware man-traps! "
Him who braves that notice — call
Hero! none of such heroics suit myself who
read plain words,
Doff my hat, and leap no barrier. Scrip-
ture says, the land 's the Lord's:
Louts then — what avail the thousand, noisy
in a smock-frocked ring,
All-agog to have me trespass, clear the
fence, be Clive their king ?
Higher warrant must you show me ere I
set one foot before
T'other in that dark direction, though I
stand forevermore
Poor as Job and meek as Moses. Ever-
more ? No! By and by
Job grows rich and Moses valiant, Clive
turns out less wise than I.
Don't object " Why call him friend, then ? "
Power is power, my boy, and still
Marks a man, — God's gift magnific, exer-
cised for good or ill.
You 've your boot now on my hearth-rug,
tread what was a tiger's skin:
Rarely such a royal monster as I lodged
the bullet in !
True, he murdered half a village, so his
own death came to pass;
,Still, for size and beauty, cunning, courage
— ah, the brute he was !
Why, that Clive, — that youth, that green-
horn, that quill-driving clerk, in
fine, —
He sustained a siege in Arcot . . . But the
world knows ! Pass the wine.

Where did I break off at ? How bring Clive
in ? Oh, you mentioned " fear " !
Just so: and, said I, that minds me of a
story you shall hear.

We were friends then, Clive and I: so, when
the clouds, about the orb
Late supreme, encroaching slowly, surely,
threaten to absorb
Ray by ray its noontide brilliance, — friend-
ship might, with steadier eye
Drawing near, bear what had burned else,
now no blaze — all majesty.
Too much bee's-wing floats my figure ?
Well, suppose a castle 's new:
None presume to climb its ramparts, none
find foothold sure for shoe
'Twixt those squares and squares of granite
plating the impervious pile
As his scale-mail's warty iron cuirasses a
crocodile.
Reels that castle thunder-smitten, storm-
dismantled ? From without
Scrambling up by crack and crevice, every
cockney prates about
Towers — the heap he kicks now ! turrets —
just the measure of his cane !
Will that do ? Observe moreover — (same
similitude again) —
Such a castle seldom crumbles by sheer
stress of cannonade:
'T is when foes are foiled and fighting 's
finished that vile rains invade,
Grass o'ergrows, o'ergrows till night-birds
congregating find no holes
Fit to build in like the topmost sockets made
for banner-poles.
So Clive crumbled slow in London, crashed
at last.

A week before,
Dining with him, — after trying churchyard
chat of days of yore, —
Both of us stopped, tired as tombstones,
head-piece, foot-piece, when they lean
Each to other, drowsed in fog-smoke, o'er
a coffined Past between.

As I saw his head sink heavy, guessed the soul's extinguishment
By the glazing eyeball, noticed how the furtive fingers went
Where a drug-box skulked behind the honest liquor, — "One more throw
Try for Clive!" thought I: "Let's venture some good rattling question!" So —
"Come Clive, tell us" — out I blurted — "what to tell in turn, years hence,
When my boy — suppose I have one — asks me on what evidence
I maintain my friend of Plassy proved a warrior every whit
Worth your Alexanders, Cæsars, Marlboroughs and — what said Pitt? —
Frederick the Fierce himself! Clive told me once" — I want to say —
"Which feat out of all those famous doings bore the bell away
— In his own calm estimation, mark you, not the mob's rough guess —
Which stood foremost as evincing what Clive called courageousness!
Come! what moment of the minute, what speck-centre in the wide
Circle of the action saw your mortal fairly deified?
(Let alone that filthy sleep-stuff, swallow bold this wholesome Port!)
If a friend has leave to question, — when were you most brave, in short?"

Up he arched his brows o' the instant — formidably Clive again.
"When was I most brave? I'd answer, were the instance half as plain
As another instance that's a brain-lodged crystal — curse it! — here
Freezing when my memory touches — ugh! — the time I felt most fear.
Ugh! I cannot say for certain if I showed fear — anyhow,
Fear I felt, and, very likely, shuddered, since I shiver now."

"Fear!" smiled I. "Well, that's the rarer: that's a specimen to seek,
Ticket up in one's museum, *Mind-Freaks, Lord Clive's Fear, Unique!*"

Down his brows dropped. On the table painfully he pored as though
Tracing, in the stains and streaks there, thoughts encrusted long ago.
When he spoke 't was like a lawyer reading word by word some will,
Some blind jungle of a statement, — beating on and on until
Out there leaps fierce life to fight with.

"This fell in my factor-days.
Desk-drudge, slaving at Saint David's, one must game, or drink, or craze.
I chose gaming: and, — because your high-flown gamesters hardly take
Umbrage at a factor's elbow if the factor pays his stake, —
I was winked at in a circle where the company was choice.
Captain This and Major That, men high of color, loud of voice,
Yet indulgent, condescending to the modest juvenile
Who not merely risked but lost his hard-earned guineas with a smile.
"Down I sat to cards, one evening, — had for my antagonist
Somebody whose name 's a secret — you 'll know why — so, if you list,
Call him Cock o' the Walk, my scarlet son of Mars from head to heel!
Play commenced: and, whether Cocky fancied that a clerk must feel
Quite sufficient honor came of bending over one green baize,
I the scribe with him the warrior, guessed no penman dared to raise
Shadow of objection should the honor stay but playing end
More or less abruptly, — whether disinclined he grew to spend
Practice strictly scientific on a booby born to stare
At — not ask of — lace-and-ruffles if the hand they hide plays fair, —
Anyhow, I marked a movement when he bade me 'Cut!'
"I rose.
'Such the new manœuvre, Captain? I 'm a novice: knowledge grows.
What, you force a card, you cheat, Sir?'

"Never did a thunder-clap
Cause emotion, startle Thyrsis locked with Chloe in his lap,
As my word and gesture (down I flung my cards to join the pack)

Fired the man of arms, whose visage, simply red before, turned black.
When he found his voice, he stammered 'That expression once again!'

"'Well, you forced a card and cheated!'

"'Possibly a factor's brain,
Busied with his all-important balance of accounts, may deem
Weighing words superfluous trouble: *cheat* to clerkly ears may seem
Just the joke for friends to venture: but we are not friends, you see!
When a gentleman is joked with, — if he 's good at repartee,
He rejoins, as do I — Sirrah, on your knees, withdraw in full!
Beg my pardon, or be sure a kindly bullet through your skull
Lets in light and teaches manner to what brain it finds! Choose quick —
Have your life snuffed out or, kneeling, pray me trim you candle-wick!'

"'Well, you cheated!'
"Then outbroke a howl from all the friends around.
To his feet sprang each in fury, fists were clenched and teeth were ground.
'End it! no time like the present! Captain, yours were our disgrace!
No delay, begin and finish! Stand back, leave the pair a space!
Let civilians be instructed: henceforth simply ply the pen,
Fly the sword! This clerk 's no swordsman? Suit him with a pistol, then!
Even odds! A dozen paces 'twixt the most and least expert
Make a dwarf a giant's equal: nay, the dwarf, if he 's alert,
Likelier hits the broader target!'

"Up we stood accordingly.
As they handed me the weapon, such was my soul's thirst to try
Then and there conclusions with this bully, tread on and stamp out
Every spark of his existence, that, — crept close to, curled about
By that toying tempting teasing fool-fore-finger's middle joint, —
Don't you guess? — the trigger yielded. Gone my chance! and at the point
Of such prime success moreover: scarce an inch above his head
Went my ball to hit the wainscot. He was living, I was dead.

"Up he marched in flaming triumph — 't was his right, mind! — up, within
Just an arm's length. 'Now, my clerkling,' chuckled Cocky with a grin
As the levelled piece quite touched me, 'Now, Sir Counting-House, repeat
That expression which I told you proved bad manners! Did I cheat?'

"'Cheat you did, you knew you cheated, and, this moment, know as well.
As for me, my homely breeding bids you — fire and go to Hell!'

"Twice the muzzle touched my forehead. Heavy barrel, flurried wrist,
Either spoils a steady lifting. Thrice: then, 'Laugh at Hell who list,
I can't! God 's no fable either. Did this boy's eye wink once? No!
There 's no standing him and Hell and God all three against me, — so,
I did cheat!'

"And down he threw the pistol, out rushed — by the door
Possibly, but, as for knowledge if by chimney, roof or floor,
He effected disappearance — I 'll engage no glance was sent
That way by a single starer, such a blank astonishment
Swallowed up their senses: as for speaking — mute they stood as mice.

"Mute not long, though! Such reaction, such a hubbub in a trice!
'Rogue and rascal! Who 'd have thought it? What 's to be expected next,
When His Majesty's Commission serves a sharper as pretext
For . . . But where 's the need of wasting time now? Naught requires delay:
Punishment the Service cries for: let disgrace be wiped away
Publicly, in good broad daylight! Resignation? No, indeed!
Drum and fife must play the Rogue's-March, rank and file be free to speed

Tardy marching on the rogue's part by appliance in the rear
— Kicks administered shall right this wronged civilian, — never fear,
Mr. Clive, for — though a clerk — you bore yourself — suppose we say —
Just as would beseem a soldier?

"'Gentlemen, attention — pray!
First, one word!'

"I passed each speaker severally in review.
When I had precise their number, names and styles, and fully knew
Over whom my supervision thenceforth must extend, — why, then —

"'Some five minutes since, my life lay — as you all saw, gentlemen —
At the mercy of your friend there. Not a single voice was raised
In arrest of judgment, not one tongue — before my powder blazed —
Ventured "Can it be the youngster blundered, really seemed to mark
Some irregular proceeding? We conjecture in the dark,
Guess at random, — still, for sake of fair play — what if for a freak,
In a fit of absence, — such things have been! — if our friend proved weak
— What's the phrase? — corrected fortune! Look into the case, at least!"
Who dared interpose between the altar's victim and the priest?
Yet he spared me! You eleven! Whosoever, all or each,
To the disadvantage of the man who spared me, utters speech
— To his face, behind his back, — that speaker has to do with me:
Me who promise, if positions change and mine the chance should be,
Not to imitate your friend and wave advantage!'

"Twenty-five
Years ago this matter happened: and 'tis certain," added Clive,
"Never, to my knowledge, did Sir Cocky have a single breath
Breathed against him: lips were closed throughout his life, or since his death,
For if he be dead or living I can tell no more than you.
All I know is — Cocky had one chance more; how he used it, — grew
Out of such unlucky habits, or relapsed, and back again
Brought the late-ejected devil with a score more in his train, —
That 's for you to judge. Reprieval I procured, at any rate.
Ugh — the memory of that minute's fear makes gooseflesh rise! Why prate
Longer? You 've my story, there 's your instance: fear I did, you see!"

"Well" — I hardly kept from laughing — "if I see it, thanks must be
Wholly to your Lordship's candor. Not that — in a common case —
When a bully caught at cheating thrusts a pistol in one's face,
I should under-rate, believe me, such a trial to the nerve!
'T is no joke, at one-and-twenty, for a youth to stand nor swerve.
Fear I naturally look for — unless, of all men alive,
I am forced to make exception when I come to Robert Clive.
Since at Arcot, Plassy, elsewhere, he and death — the whole world knows —
Came to somewhat closer quarters."

Quarters? Had we come to blows,
Clive and I, you had not wondered — up he sprang so, out he rapped
Such a round of oaths — no matter! I 'll endeavor to adapt
To our modern usage words he — well, 't was friendly license — flung
At me like so many fire-balls, fast as he could wag his tongue.

"You — a soldier? You — at Plassy? Yours the faculty to nick
Instantaneously occasion when your foe, if lightning-quick,
— At his mercy, at his malice, — has you, through some stupid inch
Undefended in your bulwark? Thus laid open, — not to flinch
— That needs courage, you 'll concede me. Then, look here! Suppose the man,
Checking his advance, his weapon still extended, not a span

Distant from my temple, — curse him! — quietly had bade me, 'There!
Keep your life, calumniator! — worthless life I freely spare:
Mine you freely would have taken — murdered me and my good fame
Both at once — and all the better! Go, and thank your own bad aim
Which permits me to forgive you!' What if, with such words as these,
He had cast away his weapon? How should I have borne me, please?
Nay, I'll spare you pains and tell you. This, and only this, remained —
Pick his weapon up and use it on myself. If so had gained
Sleep the earlier, leaving England probably to pay on still
Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the Frenchman's will."

"Such the turn," said I, "the matter takes with you? Then I abate
— No, by not one jot nor tittle, — of your act my estimate.
Fear — I wish I could detect there: courage fronts me, plain enough —
Call it desperation, madness — never mind! for here 's in rough
Why, had mine been such a trial, fear had overcome disgrace.
True, disgrace were hard to bear: but such a rush against God's face
— None of that for me, Lord Plassy, since I go to church at times,
Say the creed my mother taught me! Many years in foreign climes
Rub some marks away — not all, though! We poor sinners reach life's brink,
Overlook what rolls beneath it, recklessly enough, but think
There 's advantage in what 's left us — ground to stand on, time to call
'Lord, have mercy!' ere we topple over — do not leap, that 's all!"

Oh, he made no answer, re-absorbed into his cloud. I caught
Something like "Yes — courage: only fools will call it fear."
If aught
Comfort you, my great unhappy hero Clive, in that I heard,
Next week, how your own hand dealt you doom, and uttered just the word
"Fearfully courageous!" this, be sure, and nothing else I groaned.
I 'm no Clive, nor parson either: Clive's worst deed — we 'll hope condoned.

## EPILOGUE

In regard to the third verse of this poem the *Pall Mall Gazette* of February 1, 1890, related this incident: "One evening, just before his death-illness, the poet was reading this from a proof to his daughter-in-law and sister. He said: 'It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it 's the simple truth; and as it 's true, it shall stand.'"

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where — by death, fools think, imprisoned —
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
— Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
— Being — who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed, — fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

England in the fourteenth century presented the spectacle of a people not amalgamated, not unified in language, customs, or feeling. The descendants of the Norman conquerors held themselves aloof from the natives, treating the latter as of inferior clay. By social distinctions, by laws, by exactions of enforced and unrewarded labor, and by grinding taxes the court and the nobility kept down the English and exalted the French element in the nation. Thus the ordinary contrasts between the classes in human society were accentuated by the difference in blood. It was a time of profuse extravagance among the rich and of pinching necessity among the poor. In full knowledge of the poverty through the realm, kings poured forth the public monies on profitless foreign wars, or strutted in the pageantry of outworn chivalry and wasted huge sums in reviving the pomp of tournaments and of the fabled Round Table. Richard II could set an example of carelessness and extravagance by paying thirty thousand marks for a new cloak while his unhappy people were starving in a succession of harvest failures or were being decimated by the ravages of the plague. Upon a few occasions the general discontent found expression. William Langland embodied in his *Complaint of Piers Plowman* his realization of the social injustice and the widespread misery of the time. John Ball, the "mad priest of Kent," stung the peasants to revolt by his violent attacks on the social order and by his rude couplet: —

> "When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the gentleman?"

In this fourteenth century England of such sharp contrasts, such extravagance on the one hand and such misery on the other, was born, about 1340, Geoffrey Chaucer. Of the details of his life we know little. His father, it seems, was a vintner of Thames Street, London, and a man of wealth and importance. He succeeded in having Geoffrey installed as a page in the household of Elizabeth, wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence. Thus Chaucer from a very early age became a part of the courtly class. The importance of this fact upon his literary work was immeasurable. In all his poetry we find little reference to the political or social wrongs of the time. He saw life from the point of view of men of his class.

A few years later he seems to have accompanied Edward III on the French campaign, for in March of 1360 we have a record of the king paying sixteen pounds for Chaucer's ransom. In modern value, sixteen pounds would be worth all of one thousand dollars, so we can judge that Chaucer, or the Chaucer family, must have been of some importance in the world.

Again consulting the royal records, we find in 1366 a pension granted to Philippa Chaucer and, in 1381, the payment of this pension "to Geoffrey Chaucer, her husband." Putting the two notes together, Chaucerian scholars have deduced that about 1366 Chaucer married Philippa, a lady in waiting to the Queen. Further precise knowledge of the character or family of Philippa, or of the married felicity of Chaucer, is not obtainable.

Geoffrey Chaucer seems to have been successful in his attendance upon the royal wishes, for in 1367 we have a record of the grant of a pension to him of twenty marks a year for life, equivalent in purchasing power to-day to about eight hundred dollars. A year later his services were further recognized by his promotion to be an Esquire of the Royal Household.

His rise in importance continued. In 1369 he again accompanied the king with the army in France. In 1370 he was entrusted with a secret mission abroad, the exact nature of which has remained unknown to this day. In 1372 he was sent to Genoa to conclude certain commercial arrangements. From Genoa he went to Florence, where he may have met Petrarch and

Boccaccio, and where he certainly became acquainted with the works of Dante, who had died more than a half-century before. In 1374 he was granted a further mark of royal favor in a daily pitcher of wine from the royal stock. In 1375 he was appointed controlier of customs for wool, etc. in London, was allowed from John of Gaunt and his wife an additional pension of ten pounds a year (worth at present values about six hundred and twenty-five dollars, and was appointed ward of a certain Edmund Steplegate of Kent. In 1376 and 1377 he was employed, apparently by the influence of John of Gaunt, on various secret missions abroad. In 1382, he was appointed controller of petty customs in London. In 1386 he entered Parliament as one of the Knights of the Shire for the County of Kent.

Chaucer's income at this time must have been large, yet the records show that he must have lived up to the last penny of it. On a temporary loss of royal favor due to the ascendancy of the Duke of Gloucester over the king, Chaucer was removed from both controllerships and was soon driven to the money-lenders. Although he was later again in the royal good graces after the fall of Gloucester, he seems never to have been prosperous. Apparently the long practice of extravagant habits rendered it impossible for him to retrench. We find him occupying various offices from 1390 on. We find a record in 1394 of a royal pension of twenty pounds a year for life (equivalent to about one thousand five hundred dollars); we know that in 1398 he received an additional allowance of a tun of wine a year for life, and yet in the same year he did not dare to leave his house for fear of arrest for debt, and in 1399 Chaucer addressed an appeal to the new king for financial assistance. Henry IV granted him an additional forty marks a year pension, bringing Chaucer's total pension annual income up to more than three thousand dollars of our money. Encouraged by this prospect, he rented, December 24, 1399, a new house in London for a term of fifty-four years.

In this new house which he had entered apparently with such pleasant anticipations, he died October 25, 1400.

The actual list of official positions and the accuracy with which we can establish Chaucer in these positions lend a fictitious appearance of completeness to any sketch of his life. Of the man himself, of the intimate details of his person and character, of the formative influences that surrounded him in his youth and moulded him in his manhood, we know practically nothing. He moved in the upper stratum of the luxurious society of the period, he was a courtier all his life, he was accustomed to disregard expense and to look for royal favor to pay his debts, and yet he was evidently a man of recognized judgment and ability, obviously a polished gentleman and a witty companion. These general deductions from the statistics of the court records are all that we can positively assert with regard to him.

It is marvelous that in such a busy official life as Chaucer undoubtedly led he should have had the time to make such a notable contribution to English poetry. And more wonderful still is the evidence that in the midst of this busy life he should project such ambitious poetical schemes. It is a peculiarly human trait in Chaucer that he planned so much more than he could possibly accomplish. To a sympathetic and understanding reader, Chaucer's many unfinished works possess a unique interest in the mute testimony they offer to his nature.

So much for the bare skeleton of Chaucer's life — would that we might clothe it with flesh and blood and present the very man. We turn now to the imperishable poems he has left behind him.

At the time when Chaucer began to write, poetry did not exist in English. The poetic literature from the time of the Norman Conquest reflected the continual conflict between the old Anglo-Saxon forms and the newer Anglo-Norman forms. *Piers Plowman* in the old alliterative meter was the last brilliant flash of the Anglo-Saxon verse, coming just at the time when Chaucer was beginning his career. The Anglo-Norman writers had done scarcely more than direct the attention of the reader across the Channel to the home of a more advanced literature: their work in English was contemptible.

Under these circumstances, with no models in English, Chaucer took the most natural course. He turned to the French and Italian literature for his models, translating, imitating, and para-

phrasing during a long apprenticeship, trying in English the different verse forms, tuning his harp for an original composition. Indeed one of our earliest of contemporary references to Chaucer is to a translation: "Thou art in Albion the God of worldly love," wrote the French poet Eustace Deschamps, "and into good English thou didst translate the book of the Rose." The *Romaunt of the Rose* referred to by Deschamps is the most prominent work of Chaucer's early period, but in a number of adaptations and imitations he showed how he was trying his hand. He accepted the continental models, the courts of love, the dream, the machinery of romance and chivalric love, and experimented with them in English form. His *Book of the Duchess*, *Parlement of Foules*, *House of Fame*, and *Legend of Good Women* are examples of this period.

A more noteworthy work of his apprenticeship was his *Troilus and Criseyde*. Although this, like the poems mentioned above, was after a continental model, Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, it was neither a direct translation nor a paraphrase. Chaucer deliberately altered elements of the story to increase its artistic finish. He followed the narrative plot of Boccaccio, but he borrowed from various other sources — Guido della Colonne and Boethius, especially — to heighten the dramatic quality and impart a moral character to the tale. His characters are different: Troilus is more heroic, Criseyde is more interesting, Pandarus is more individual. He showed great independence in his selection from and in his treatment of his original, expanding Boccaccio's 5704 lines into a poem of 8246 lines. In short, he indicated by this poem a tendency to break away from his models and compose his own setting.

*Romaunt of the Rose*, *Parlement of Foules*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and the rest, however, are but introductions to his *Canterbury Tales*. On these his fame as one of England's greatest poets rests. The conception is not wholly original, — collections of tales, reaching a climax in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, were not uncommon in those times, — but it was a happy genius that imagined a company setting out on the spring pilgrimage to Canterbury, and agreeing to tell stories to while away the hours. In such a pilgrimage might be gathered representatives of all the ranks and grades of contemporary society, and the variety of setting as the cavalcade passed from place to place could enhance the interest of the whole. A more ideal framework could scarcely be imagined.

It is a pity that so little of the whole plan was completed. From the Knight through his son the Squire, and the Abbot, the Parson, the Scholar, the Clerk, the Prioress, the Doctor, the Cook, the Plowman, the Sailor, each of the twenty-nine pilgrims (including Chaucer himself) was to tell four tales, two on the outward and two on the homeward journey. The tales were to be connected by the narrative of incidents of the pilgrimage, giving an opportunity for a lively depiction of the characters, their quarrels, their remarks on the stories, etc. Only twenty-two tales were completed, and two more are left to us in a fragmentary state. Between some groups the connecting links are omitted. And yet in these fragments of a great plan Chaucer revealed himself as a true artist and poet. The pilgrims become living people, the scene along the Canterbury road is spread before our eyes: — the jovial, profane Harry Bailly, the low and churlish Miller, the quarrelsome Friar and Summoner, the Canon's Yeoman riding his sweating horse to join the pilgrimage, all become so real that we long to place the day and hour of each man's tale. Chaucer's descriptions of dress and appearance, his command of a delicate satire, his ability to fit the story to the character, mark him a creative artist.

Judging him by his greatest work, then, we shall rank Chaucer first in time and high in place among English poets. His genius was essentially narrative: he was our first gifted short-story writer. His characterization, his plot, his climaxes are of the short-story type. His manipulation of scene and incident has the dramatic quality of the short-story form. He leaves with us always the impression of a man who dearly loved living people. He is cheerful. This world, with all its faults, hypocrisies, sins, is yet a good world — at any rate, he knows no better. Though he never rises to the sublimity of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth, his scenes have the interest and freshness of early morning. He is indeed the dawn of a national English poetry.

## EDMUND SPENSER

Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, succeeded to the throne of England upon the death of her sister, Mary, November 17, 1558. The curiosity of historians has exploited her weaknesses. She was to the end of her life inordinately vain, drinking in without qualms the most fulsome flattery; she was at times as undignified as the lowest peasant in her realm, as when she flaunted her flirtations before the court or cursed like a fishwife in the council chamber; she was without religious feeling; she was the past-master of diplomatic duplicity; she was devoid of a sense of gratitude, as was shown, for example, when she allowed Walsingham, who had sacrificed his whole fortune for her sake, to spend his last days in abject poverty. These are but a few of the charges an able chronicler of her time can bring against Elizabeth. To offset these, however, her virtues and successes redeemed England from a state of degradation and raised it to the highest pinnacle of fame throughout Europe. She was masculine in her undaunted courage and tenacity of purpose; she had rare intuitive skill in selecting her councilors, so that those who sat about Elizabeth's council board represented the ablest men in the kingdom; her personal religious indifference gave England peace when in the great rival countries persecution was the order of the day; her conscienceless mendacity enabled her to outwit the shrewdest diplomatists of Europe at a period when intrigue and duplicity were synonymous with statecraft; her love of splendor and parade actually raised her in the love and esteem of her loyal subjects; her wide range of intellectual interests and her directness of vision and finesse of conversation, made her the center of the most brilliant court of the time in the world. She wholly dominated her environment. Her long reign, from 1558 to 1603, is rightly designated as the Elizabethan age, whether we write of economic progress, political progress, or literary progress.

In Elizabethan England literature flourished. The thrill of a new renaissance inspired the poets. The growth of the nation in power and wealth fostered the increase of a keenly intelligent leisure class able to appreciate and willing to support literature of all kinds. Prose, poetry, and drama of a kind unexcelled in our history abounded. The Elizabethan is really the golden age of English letters. Foremost among the poets of the period was Edmund Spenser. He was acknowledged in his own lifetime to be first among the English poets, and in common literary judgment to-day, he ranks with Chaucer, Milton, and Wordsworth as among the greatest in our history.

In a discussion of the facts of Spenser's life we are confronted with a condition very like that met in the discussion of Chaucer: — we can gather from official records a number of dry dates and we can supplement these by a few autobiographical references in his poetry, but in the end the intimate nature of the man eludes us. We cannot place his birth-date or birthplace exactly; we face a disagreement in the exact date of his death; we have never learned the name or character of the northern lass the love of whom had for a long time a marked influence on his work; and we know only the most sensational events of his long sojourn in Ireland.

Edmund Spenser was born in London about the year 1552, six years before the accession of Elizabeth to the English throne. He was thus of about the same age as Raleigh (b. 1552), Hooker and Sidney (b. 1554), and Bacon (b. 1561). His father, John Spenser, was apparently a clothmaker or tailor and a member of the great and influential London Guild of Merchant Tailors. His father's membership in the Guild enabled Edmund to be admitted to the excellent Merchant Tailor's School in the city. It is certain that his family was not wealthy, for the records of the expenditures of a certain Robert Nowell, a rich and charitable London citizen, are extant, containing items advanced to "Edmund Spensore, scholler of the m'chante tayler scholl."

In 1569 he entered Pembroke College, Cambridge. Little is known of his college career, but from what we understand to have been the character of the curriculum at that time we can realize how little it fostered the genius of the poet. The college was a hotbed of religious con-

troversy, Calvinism being taught as the only acceptable Protestant doctrine in defiance of the ritual of the established Anglican Church. Roman Catholic emissaries were abroad in the land, attacking the rights of the queen and fomenting rebellion against her in favor of Mary Stuart. The university seethed with factional quarrels. Spenser himself seems to have been out of sympathy with the extremes of Puritanism preached by one group at the college and to have accepted a kind of modified Puritanism which allowed him without scruple to enjoy the gayety and gallantry of the social life of the time.

In 1576 he left Cambridge with his master's degree. He seems then to have gone to the north of England for a visit, perhaps to some of the more influential relatives of his family in that part of England. His poetry bears witness to the fact that while he was on this visit he fell passionately in love with one "Rosalind," whose identity has never been disclosed. His suit was rejected, but his love for this unknown "Rosalind" had a great influence upon him and upon his work for many years thereafter.

His career as a man of letters had in a small way begun before this. Even when he was in college he had published verse of unusual polish and fluency. In 1578 he left the north of England for London in the hope of preferment at court. His hope was not entirely unreasonable: he had made a success in Cambridge, he had already published verse of great promise, and his family connections in the country insured him an entrance into the court life. We find him successful in gaining the patronage of the Earl of Leicester, the favorite with the queen, and in making the acquaintance of such gentlemen as Sir Philip Sidney and Lord Strange of court circles. In 1579 *The Shepheard's Calendar* appeared and showed a fulfillment of the promise of Spenser's youth.

It may safely be said that *The Shepheard's Calendar* was the most notable single contribution to English poetry since Chaucer. Framed after the classical models of Theocritus and Virgil, the *Calendar* contains twelve eclogues, one for each month. Of the twelve, three treat of his own futile love, three are upon general subjects, — as old age, the perfect pattern of a poet, and the like, — three are upon religious questions, one celebrates the queen, one is a love poem, and one is an elegy. In his rustic simplicity of diction and style Spenser imitated Chaucer, from whom indeed he professes to have learned his art, but in his models he reflects the great influence of the revival of learning in Europe. This collection of pastoral poems shows a variety and melody of verse and language which set it at once above the works of his contemporaries. It was produced at a time when an example of great poetry was most needed, for the two centuries that had elapsed since Chaucer had been barren. Its effect upon subsequent poetry was marked by the production of many pastorals of a similar style. The influence of Spenser's *Shepheard's Calendar* can be distinctly traced in Milton's *Lycidas*.

Spenser's prospects upon the publication of *The Shepheard's Calendar* must have seemed bright. His patron was a favorite with the queen, his poem had immediately won the favor of the foremost circles of the day, and he had actually made enough money by his publication to render him comfortable for the time. Some strong influence, however, seems to have blocked him. It has been a tradition that Lord Burghley, the treasurer under Elizabeth, opposed his preferment because of his friendship with the Earl of Leicester. All that Spenser procured was the office of private secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton when the latter was appointed Lord Deputy to Ireland in 1580.

To a man of Spenser's tastes, especially when these tastes had been whetted by two years in the polished society of London, continued residence in Ireland was the equivalent of dreary exile from all that was most congenial. He was separated from inspiring contact with the greatest minds of all English literature and set down amid a sullen, rebellious people animated by the bitterest hostility toward the English. Although Spenser seems to have prospered materially in Ireland — was Clerk of Degrees and Recognizances in the Irish Court of Chancery, 1581–88; Clerk to the Council of Munster, 1588 to about 1592; Sheriff of Cork, 1598; received a grant of Kilcolman Castle and three thousand acres about 1588 on which he resided for many years, — we have indisputable evidence that he did not consider himself happy. He made

repeated trips to London, ostensibly to arrange for the publication of the separate parts of *The Faerie Queene*, but equally for the purpose of seeking preferment in London, and in a poem written near the close of his life we find him referring to himself as one

> whom sullein care,
> Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay
> In Princes Court, and expectation vague
> Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away
> Like empty shaddowes, did afflict my brayne.
>
> *Prothalamion, 5–9.*

Spenser's greatest work, *The Faerie Queene*, was begun about 1580. By 1589 three books were completed and Spenser made a protracted visit to London to present them to the publisher and to have them brought to the queen's attention. We can imagine what an oasis this must have been in Spenser's life. Again he was in the midst of the society of London, a more brilliant society than ever before; again his poetry gained immediate favor; again his hopes for preferment must have risen high. It is not too much to suppose that on this trip Spenser made the acquaintance of the young but popular Shakespeare. Spenser had in Ireland cultivated the friendship of Sir Walter Raleigh and may have met Shakespeare through Raleigh's influence, or, Spenser being under the patronage at this time of the Earl of Essex and Shakespeare under that of the Earl of Southampton, their respective patrons may have brought them together. It is interesting to think of these two poets, one immortal in all literature and the other recognized as of the highest rank in English literature, meeting in those great days of England.

Spenser's stay in London lasted about two years. In 1591 we find him back again at his post in Ireland. A few years later begins the love recorded in more than eighty *amoretti*, or sonnets. In June of 1594 his love was crowned by marriage with Elizabeth Boyle, and his joy at his success was expressed in the glorious *Epithalamion*. A year later he again journeyed to London, probably with his wife, to arrange for the publication of another section of *The Faerie Queene* and to seek preferment. This visit lasted less than a year and, so far as preferment was concerned, was as futile as his former attempts. He returned to his estate in Ireland in 1596.

The closing days of his life were peculiarly terrible. In 1598 one of the rebellious mobs attacked Kilcolman Castle and burned it to the ground. It was rumored in London that in the fire one of Spenser's children was burned alive. Spenser fled, ruined financially and broken in spirit by his loss. Again he went to London, where, either at the end of 1598 or in the early days of 1599, he died in poor lodgings. Ben Jonson is reported by Drummond to have said: "That the Irish having rob'd Spenser's goods, and burnt his house and a little child new born, he and his wyfe escaped: and after, he died for lake of bread in King Street, and refused 20 pieces sent to him by my Lord of Essex, and said, He was sorrie he had no time to spend them."

The original inscription on the tomb in Westminister Abbey read as follows: "Heare lyes (expecting the second comminge of our Saviour Jesus) the body of Edmond Spenser, the prince of poets in his tyme, whose divine spirit needs noe other witnesse than the works which he left behinde him, he was borne in London in the year 1552, and died in the yeare 1599."

In a dramatic age, Spenser stands out as the one great non-dramatic poet. Removed by fortune from the influences of the English court life to the cold and uninviting environment of Ireland, he there wove the figures of his imagination into poetry. He claimed Chaucer as his father in poetry, as was the fashion with many poets of the fifteenth century, but he is radically different from Chaucer. Chaucer's poetry is of the open air, fresh, bright, clear, direct, active; Spenser's is of the drawing-room, polished, refined, dreamy, imaginative. Chaucer was master of the story-teller's art, contrived his situations with dramatic foresight and carried on his plot with vigor and speed; Spenser often lost himself in the succession of rich images that floated before his mind; his story lapsed while he dreamed. Spenser is truly the poet who appeals to

poets more than to the general reader. To the latter, accustomed to rapidity of plot and interesting complication of incident, the poem soon becomes tedious: the reader reads so much and goes such a little way on his journey. But to the poet, the exquisite harmony of the language and the richness of the pictures sustains the interest to the end. No English poet has been gifted with a more fertile imagination or with a more delicate ear. "He has had more idolatry and imitation from his brethren," says Leigh Hunt, "than all the rest put together. The old undramatic poets, Drayton, Browne, Drummond, Giles and Phineas Fletcher, were as full of him as the dramatic were of Shakespeare. Milton studied and used him, calling him the 'sage and serious Spenser'; and adding, that he 'dared be known to think him a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.' Cowley said that he became a poet by reading him. Dryden claimed him for a master. Pope said he read him with as much pleasure when he was old, as young; Collins and Gray loved him; Thomson, Shenstone, and a host of inferior writers, expressly imitated him; Burns, Byron, Shelley, and Keats made use of his stanza; Coleridge eulogized him; and he is as dear to the best living poets as he was to their predecessors. Spenser has stood all the changes in critical opinion; all the logical and formal conclusions of the understanding, as opposed to imagination and lasting sympathy."

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

England has the honor of contributing one name to the trio of world poets, Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. In depth of vision, fullness of sympathy, perfection of art, and universality of appeal, in short, in all the characteristics of a true poet, these three stand foremost.

William Shakespeare was baptized in the little church of his birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon, April 26, 1564. He was probably two or three days old at the time, so that the date of his birth can be placed with considerable certainty as April 23, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, at the time of Shakespeare's birth seems to have been a well-to-do trader in farm produce of Stratford, a man of considerable importance in the little town, being High Bailiff in 1568; his mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a landowner in the neighboring village of Wilmcote.

Of Shakespeare's youth and education, we know very little. He would naturally attend the schools of the town and receive the usual drill in Latin grammar and literature, studying Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Seneca, etc. We have evidence from the records of the town to show that when Shakespeare was about ten years old his father's good fortune ceased and John Shakespeare began to sink into hopeless financial difficulties. It is fair to presume that under these circumstances the boy was taken from school to help the family fortunes. This presumption coincides with the statement of a contemporary (Aubrey, d. 1697): "I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbors that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade."

Our next certain knowledge of Shakespeare is of his marriage in the autumn of 1582 to Anne Hathaway, a woman about eight years older than he. She was the daughter of a farmer of Shottery, a near-by village. May 26, 1583, Shakespeare's first child, Susanna, was baptized in Stratford, and February 2, 1585, his twin children, Hamnet and Judith.

Some time between 1585 and 1587 Shakespeare left Stratford for London and was temporarily swallowed up in the maelstrom of the city life. When he emerged in 1592, it was as a rising young dramatist.

The reasons for his leaving Stratford cannot be known with any certainty. A credible tradition states that he was prosecuted for deer-stealing in the park of the great landowner of the district, Sir Thomas Lucy, and retorted by lampooning the knight. The prosecution being thereupon pressed with extra rigor, Shakespeare was forced to flee from Stratford. There is nothing inherently improbable in this tradition, and yet we have no evidence to prove it a fact. It first appeared in full in Rowe's account of Shakespeare's life in 1709, almost a century after Shakespeare had died. If we disregard this legend, we can find logical reasons for Shakespeare leaving Stratford in the love for play-acting inspired by seeing in Stratford during his young manhood, the King's Company, the Earl of Worcester's Company, and other companies of

actors, and in a natural desire to try his fortunes in the great London world when his father's failures made a prospect of success in his little village doubtful.

London could not at first have looked kindly on a boy in his early twenties coming from a small country village. Such a boy would be left to starve or to fight his way as best he could. Tradition relates that his first work was as holder of horses at the theater entrances. Goldsmith alludes to an early existence among the Axe Lane beggars, but no other foundation for this statement is known.

By 1592 Shakespeare had become a member of an acting company of recognized reputation and was actually engaged in writing plays or patching up old plays for his fellow actors. We have a contemporary record to prove that his success thus early had inspired jealousy among his fellow playwrights. Robert Greene (d. September, 1592) refers to "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his conceit the only Shakescene in a countrie . . ." The expression "Tygers heart," etc., occurs in *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke* and in *3 Henry VI*. The point of the attack on Shakespeare (alluded to in *Johannes Factotum* and *Shakescene*) lies in the reference to his being used to work over old plays for his company.

From this period his progress was rapid. In 1594 he and his company played before the queen; the dedication of his poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* shows that he had come under the patronage of the Earl of Southampton; his acting company became in 1594 the Lord Chamberlain's Company, and later, in 1603, His Majesty's Company; and from 1595 on a steady stream of pirated editions of his plays and poems, and in some cases of plays or poems never written by him, testifies to his popularity. Numerous contemporary references support the evidence just mentioned.[1] For example, Francis Meres in his *Wit's Treasury* (*Palladis Tamia*, 1598) wrote: ". . . the sweete wittie soule of *Ovid* lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued *Shakespeare;* witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, etc. As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage. . . ."

It is probable that in the years of Shakespeare's success his thoughts often turned back to his boyhood home. His father's affairs had become more and more involved. The records show that John Shakespeare was deeply in debt and was sued in the courts on various occasions. Even before Shakespeare had left Stratford for London, his father had lost by the foreclosure of mortgages certain farms in the near-by villages of Snitterfield and Ashbies, and by the beginning of 1586 he had no property which could be attached for debt. Suddenly, in 1596, the lawsuits stopped, so that we are led to believe that the successful son in London went to his father's aid. This deduction is further supported by the known fact that in the same year the father applied to the College of Heralds for the grant of a coat of arms. Three years later, 1599, an application for an "exemplification" of the Shakespeare coat of arms was successful, and John Shakespeare became John Shakespeare, Gent., bestowing, of course,the same distinction on his son.

The researches of Professor Charles William Wallace have unearthed from the documents in the Public Record Office of London a number of papers bearing on a lawsuit in which Christopher Mountjoy, Shakespeare's landlord in London, was defendant and Shakespeare himself a witness. From these papers we learn that Shakespeare boarded with the Mountjoys within five minutes' walk of St. Paul's Cathedral in a highly respectable neighborhood during the years (about 1598 to 1604) when he wrote his greatest plays.

Evidence of Shakespeare's prosperity during this period, in fact during his whole life from 1594 on, is not lacking. Besides his income as an actor and a playwright, he was, from about 1599, a shareholder in the Blackfriars Theater and in the Globe Theater. These investments were very profitable, probably amounting to as much as five hundred pounds a year. The

[1] Cf. *Shakespeare Allusion Book*. J. Munro, Editor. London, 1909.

records show also a number of legal and financial transactions involving sums of considerable size. At the height of his career Shakespeare may have had an income of more than twenty thousand dollars a year, reckoning according to the purchasing power of money to-day. In 1597 he purchased New Place, at that time the finest residence in Stratford. In 1602 he bought one hundred and seven acres in Old Stratford; in 1605 he bought the right to farm the Stratford tithes; in 1610 he bought the Combe estate. He, "in his elder days," writes Ward, "lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for that had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of a thousand a year, as I have heard."

The Stratford records have preserved for us some knowledge of events which must have strongly affected his life during these years. In 1596 Hamnet, his only son, died at the age of eleven years; in 1601 his father died; in 1607, his eldest child, Susanna, was married to John Hale, a doctor; in 1608 his mother, Mary Arden Shakespeare, died; in 1616, February 10, his daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney, a vintner.

Shakespeare seems to have retired wholly from London circles and interests toward the close of his life. It is conjectured that about 1611 he sold his shares in the theater and went to live as a country gentleman of wealth in Stratford. In his house, March 25, 1616, he signed his last will and testament. And there he died April 23, 1616, and two days later was buried in the chancel of the little Stratford church. Over his remains is a flat dark tombstone with the inscription: —

> Good frend, for Jesus sake forbeare
> To digg the dust enclosed heare:
> Bleste be ye man y$^{t}$ spares thes stones,
> And curst be he y$^{t}$ moves my bones.

Shakespeare's main work was done in the field of the drama and his great fame rests upon the insight, breadth of sympathy, and power of expression he displayed in that field. Extracts from his plays, poetic though such extracts may appear, yet lose something of their force and pertinency by being plucked from their context. We have chosen, therefore, to represent Shakespeare's poetry by a few lyrics selected from those sprinkled through his comedies and by a baker's dozen of his Sonnets.

Meres in 1598 wrote of Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends." Altogether there are preserved to us 154 Sonnets. The series from number 1 to 126 seems to have been addressed to a man, and from 127 to 154 to a woman. Scholars have sought to interpret the story of the Sonnets as autobiographical, but, although some of them seem to point to real incidents in his life, most of them were probably written in accordance with the sonneteering fashion of the day. The few that we have selected in the text were chosen because of their inherent nobleness of thought and beauty of expression rather than because of their possible autobiographical interpretation.

## ROBERT HERRICK

The luxury and splendor of the Elizabethan age, based on a proud consciousness of increasing wealth and power and held within bounds by a wise queen, decayed rapidly under Elizabeth's immediate successors. Vice and profligacy came to the fore with few redeeming traces of genius, until with a remarkable convulsion the whole rotten system was swept aside for a while and replaced with the austerities of Puritanism. The literature that had reflected so brilliantly the life and spirit of the Elizabethan age, reflected later the corruption of the Jacobean and Caroline ages that followed. The drama, through which medium the greatest geniuses had expressed themselves, went to the last extremes in portraying the contemporary ways of life and thought and was finally checked by the closing of the theatres by the Puritans. Even persons of no Puritan cast of mind must agree that the check was necessary.

Although with the accession of the Puritans to power, the whole character of government,

society, and literature seems to have undergone a *volte-face*, it was undoubtedly a fact that England remained at heart deeply devoted to its royalist ideals. The memories of English glory and renown were too recent and too intimately bound up with royalty to be extinguished at once. In literature of the day the majority of names is made up of Cavalier poets, in whose opinion the happy phrase or the quick turn of thought in a short lyric was but an accomplishment of the cultivated gentlemen. We have, then, side by side with the stern Puritan writers, at whose head stood Milton, a group of talented, polished gentlemen whose work in literature has survived to the present day. Lovelace, Suckling, Carew, Davenant, Herrick, all belong to the Cavalier poets; their lives were bound up with the royalist cause and their poetry reflected their ideals.

Greatest of the poets of these sympathies was Robert Herrick. In the period when the drama was decaying, Herrick developed the lyric to heights never before reached and seldom since surpassed; removed by fate from the political struggles that preceded Charles's execution and settled in a little Devonshire pastorate, he spent his time in writing his little songs to imaginary *inamorata*. With the delicate artistry of a goldsmith, Herrick was carving cherry-stones, while his contemporary Milton was adorning the Doric and Ionic columns of literature. Says Swinburne: "The last of his line, he is and will probably be always the first in rank and station of English song-writers. We have only to remember how rare it is to find a perfect song, good to read and good to sing, combining the merits of Coleridge and Shelley with the capabilities of Tommy Moore and Haynes Bayly, to appreciate the unique and unapproachable excellence of Herrick."

Robert Herrick, born in London and baptized August 24, 1591, was a descendant of a family well known in Leicestershire from early in the fourteenth century. His grandfather, John Eyrick, or Herrick, was a freeman in Leicester in 1535 and later was twice the Lord Mayor of the town; his father, Nicholas Herrick, was a goldsmith of London who died November 9, 1592, fifteen months after the poet's birth, from the effects of a fall from an upper window. Nicholas Herrick left an estate which realized upwards of £5000, which in modern values would equal about £30,000. Robert, with the other children, was left by the terms of his father's will to the guardianship of William Heyrick (Herrick), his uncle, one of the wealthiest goldsmiths of the time.

Of Herrick's youth we know little for certain. Frequent references to "beloved Westminster" have led to the belief that he was educated at this school. In 1607, when he was sixteen years old, he was bound apprentice for ten years to his uncle, then become Sir William Herrick.

The indentures of his apprenticeship were apparently waived later by his uncle, for we have record of his matriculation as a fellow commoner at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1614. A number of letters from him to his uncle, written during his residence at college, are extant. Most of them are requests for remittances, as, for example: —

Sir, my dutie remember to yourself and Lady; the cause essentiall is this: That I would entreat you to paye to this bringer to Mr. Adrian Marius, bookseller, in the Black Friers, the some of X*l*. The which my tutor hath receaved, to be payde at London . . . Your ever obsequious, R. Hearick.

Cambridge, 11th of October.

And again: —

. . . The essence of my writing is (as heretofore) to entreat you to paye for my use to Mr. Arthour Johnson, bookseller, in Paule's Churchyard, the ordinarie sume of tenn pounds, and that with as much sceleritie you maye, though I could wish chardges had leaden wings and tortice feet to come upon me; *sed votis puerilibus opto*. . . . Thus I salute your vertues.

Cambr., April, 1617.[1]

Hopefull R. Hearick.

[1] From letters selected by Mr. Nichols and published in his *History of Leicestershire*.

Herrick's university career must have been marked by extravagance. He seems to have had a quarterly allowance of £10 (value now about £60) and to have received on several occasions substantial help from his uncle; yet we find him leaving St. John's for Trinity Hall with the avowed purpose of curtailing his expenses, and the records show that as late as 1629 he was still in debt £10 16*s*. 9*d*. to the college steward. He took his bachelor's degree in 1617 and his master's degree in 1620.

When Herrick left the university and returned to London, his funds must have been restricted. Although Nicholas Herrick had left a goodly fortune, its division between his wife and seven children left comparatively little for each child. Furthermore, Robert Herrick's tendencies at the university indicated that, as soon as the restraining influence of his "careful" uncle was removed, any fortune he might have would soon be dissipated. An occasional reference in his poems shows that he appreciated financial help from his patrons, as: —

*To the Patron of Poets, Mr. End. Porter*

Let there be patrons; patrons like to thee,
Brave Porter! Poets ne'r will wanting be:
Fabius, and Cotta, Lentulus, all live
In thee, thou man of men! who here do'st give
Not onely subject-matter for our wit,
But likewise oyle of maintenance to it. . . .

Just what year Herrick took holy orders is not known. It was a natural career for a university-trained man, and yet Herrick was hardly the type we should expect in a pulpit or pastorate. He may have adopted the career in the expectation of speedy preferment. He had influential friends at court, Pembroke, Westmoreland, Edward Norgate and others; his poems for New Year anthems had been set to music by the most notable composer of the day, Henry Lawes; he may have been known personally to the king.

In 1629, apparently upon the recommendation of the Earl of Exeter, Herrick was presented by the king to the vicarage of Dean Prior, in Devonshire. Although the annual value of the living was only £50 (about £300 in modern value), the elevation of the previous incumbent, Dr. Potter, to be Bishop of Carlisle may have inspired high hopes in Herrick's breast.

These hopes were never realized. After Herrick had settled in the little Devonshire pastorate, he seems to have been forgotten by his associates at court. The evidence afforded by many of his poems shows conclusively that he was discontented with his lot, and yet he did not, like Spenser, make repeated journeys to London in search of royal favor. For nineteen years he lived a bachelor life in the secluded village. His household consisted of one old servant, Prudence Baldwin by name, a pet dog, a goose, a hen, and a tame pig which he had taught to drink beer out of a tankard. Donald Mitchell draws rather a gross picture of him: "This Robert Herrick was a ponderous, earthy-looking man, with huge double chin, drooping cheeks, a great Roman nose, prominent glassy eyes, that showed around them the red lines begotten of strong potions of Canary, and the whole set upon a massive neck which might have been that of Heliogabalus." As a pastor he was acceptable, although he never seems to have done more than his routine duties. Tradition records that upon one occasion he hurled his sermon at the heads of his little congregation, cursing his listeners for their inattention.

It is characteristic of man to complain of his lot, so we should not take too seriously Herrick's comments upon "dull Devonshire," the "rockie" and "rude" Deanbourne River near by, and

A people currish; churlish as the seas;
And rude, almost, as rudest salvages.

It is certain that Herrick did much of his best work while he was at Dean Prior. His interest was aroused by the quaint semi-pagan customs of the villagers, he loved the Morris-dances, the wakes, the Twelfth-Night revels, and he celebrated these in his verse. Steeped as he was in classic poetry, permeated with the spirit of Anacreon, Horace, Martial, Tibullus, and the rest, Herrick succeeded in creating in his imagination an Arcadian paradise from his Devonshire village environment.

In 1648 the Puritans, recognizing Herrick's royalist sympathies, removed him from his vicarage. He went at once to London, prepared to rejoin his old companions and congenial wits. He hailed his release from the dull routine of the Dean Prior pastorate with joy; he referred to the time of his residence therein as "a long and dreary banishment."

At London he dropped his clergyman's title and garb, and became Robert Herrick, Esquire. Tradition has it that he was at this time in abject poverty, subsisting on the charity of his friends, but it seems improbable that his many wealthy relatives would have allowed him to come to such a pass. At any rate, it is certain that he undertook at this time the arrangement and publication (1648) of his poems under the title *Hesperides ; or, The Books both Human and Divine of Robert Herrick.* The "Divine" works which formed a part of the published volume were entitled "Noble Numbers." He had previously, in 1635, contributed some verses to *A Description of the King and Queen of Fairies,* and a record has been found, date April 29, 1640, of "The severall poems written by Master Robert Herrick"; but these are lost to us, and we must take it for granted that they are included in the *Hesperides* volume. Herrick did not show in his poems a wide range, but in the pastoral lyric he is unsurpassed. He has left in his single publication that is known to us about thirteen hundred poems, all of them very short, many of them but a single couplet. A number of them are worthless as poetry and a few are coarse, vulgar, rude, and repulsive, but some — and after careful selection it is astonishing how many these are — are gems of purest ray. He has portrayed with sure art the quaint aspects of English country life: —

> I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
> Of bridegrooms, brides and of their bridal cakes.

And again his short love lyrics reach in delicacy and fervor heights that have never been excelled.

After the publication of this volume, the details of Herrick's life for fourteen years are lost to us. We have some indications that his poems were well received by the Cavalier partisans, for many of them were set to music by the most prominent composers of the day, Lawes, Laniere, Ramsay, and Wilson. The fact that he had been ejected from his vicarage because of his royalist sympathies, too, must have given him a certain popularity. Until the first days of the Restoration, however, we have no record of where he was or of what he was doing, or of how he lived. Then, in August of 1662, Herrick, seventy-one years old, was restored to his vicarage at Dean Prior, displacing the Puritan sympathizer, Dr. Syms, who fourteen years before had taken the vicarage.

Again his life is closed to us. Biographers have vainly tried to unearth some details of his remaining years at Dean Prior. Certain it is that nothing more came from his pen. We are left to imagine his bachelor household, the servant, the dog, the goose, the hen, and the famed pig that drank out of a tankard. Our sole remaining exact information is obtained from the parish register, as follows: —

> Robert Herrick, Vicker, was buried
> y^e^ 15th day October, 1674.

## JOHN MILTON

Although the excesses of rigor that marked the abrupt change from Caroline government to the Puritan Commonwealth were the work of but a few fanatics, these excesses have stamped indelibly upon the minds of succeeding generations the Puritan characteristics. We still lay stress, as Macaulay did, upon "the ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements." And Milton, who has become to many the typical representative of his age in literature, has suffered in character as a result of our impressions and prejudices. Steadfast of purpose, noble in life, dignified in mien, learned in the Scriptures he was, but without

ostentation or vain pride, and with no peer in human learning, — as for example in a knowledge of the classics, — or in an appreciation of such polite amusements as music and poetry.

Of Milton's life we know much more than of the lives of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, or Herrick. John Milton was born in London December 9, 1608. His father, John Milton, was a wealthy London scrivener or notary, endowed with a rare taste in art, poetry, and music, and himself a composer whose tunes were admitted to the best contemporary collections. His mother, Sarah Jeffrey, was one of the two orphan daughters of a London "citizen and merchant-taylor." Of her Milton once wrote: "A most excellent mother and particularly known for her charities through the neighborhood."

The little home in Bread Street, London, with which Milton's life until he was sixteen years old was closely associated, was one well adapted to foster the development of his genius. The noblest of moral precept and example was combined with the artistic tastes of his music-loving father and with the strict classical training required for entrance to the university. Milton himself in later years bore witness to his father's influence over his studies: "Both at the grammar school and also under other masters at home he caused me to be instructed daily." His training he absorbed with an assiduity very unusual in a child. Naturally serious in temperament, he set for himself even in boyhood rigorous standards of thought and conduct. At the age of twelve he rarely left his books before midnight.

At sixteen he matriculated at Christ College, Cambridge, where he spent the next seven years of his life, four years studying for his B.A. degree and three for his M.A. There he continued his studious life and apparently became inspired with the idea that he should prepare himself for some notable creation in poetry. In certain Latin epistles to his friend Charles Diodati, then at Oxford, he referred to his ambitions; and he wrote a number of Latin poems and several English poems which stand out notably above the work of his college mates. The English poems of this period include *On the Death of a Fair Infant, Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity,* the sonnets *On Shakespeare* and *On his being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three.* Most remarkable of these is the *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity,* which, though diffuse and marked with conceits inherited from the influence of John Donne, shows in passages the inspiration of an original genius.

It was the hope of Milton's father that Milton would take holy orders upon the completion of his studies at Cambridge, but the young poet's nature rebelled against the restraints imposed thereby. In later life he expressed his convictions on the subject: "The church, to whose service by the intention of my parents and friends I was destined as a child, and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal . . . I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." He was referring to the system which Archbishop Laud was establishing and maintaining in the Church of England. Milton, therefore, left Cambridge in 1632 with his master's degree, but with no definite profession. In his sonnet *On his being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three,* written shortly before he left college, he refers to his fixed hope of future accomplishment: —

> . . . Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
> That I to manhood am arrived so near,
> And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
> That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
> Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
> It shall be still in strictest measure even
> To that same lot, however mean or high,
> Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
> All is, if I have grace to use it so,
> As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

The next few years were among the happiest of Milton's life. His father had in his seventieth year retired from business and settled in the little village of Horton, a short distance from Lon-

don. Here Milton stayed in seclusion, absorbed in serious study and thought. His father readily fell in with his ambitions and Milton went through a systematic study of the Greek and Latin classics, of mathematics, music, and the science which we might now term cosmography. His poetical works were few but very choice — the fragment, *Arcades*, written at the request of Henry Lawes to be put to music for an entertainment; the more elaborate masque, *Comus*, again written at the musician Lawes's request, to be played by the children of the Earl of Bridgewater; the two fine rural idylls *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso;* and the magnificent *Lycidas* written for a little volume of commemorative verse gathered by the friends of Edward King, who in 1637 was drowned in the Irish Sea. His time was not wasted. To his friend Diodati he wrote: "I am growing my wings for a flight."

In 1638 Milton left Horton for a continental tour. He spent most of his time in Italy where he was received cordially in the literary circles of the period. In Florence, Rome, and Naples he tarried for months, enriching his mind by his contact with art and literature and society. An especially noteworthy incident of his trip was his meeting in Florence with Galileo, at the time still held in confinement by the Inquisition. Milton's original plans seem to have included Greece and Palestine, but the news of King Charles's expedition against the Scotch led him to cut his journey short. He had too keen an insight into the political situation not to realize the importance of the struggle developing between the king and the people, and too sharp a conscience to allow himself to be absent from England at such a time. "The sad news of civil war in England," he says, "called me back; for I considered it base that, while my fellow-countrymen were fighting at home for liberty, I should be travelling at my ease for intellectual culture."

The twenty years that followed Milton's return from Italy in 1639 were years of struggle and bitterness, both in his public and his private life, and years in which to all outward appearances the springs of poetic inspiration were choked within him. The poet of promise who had written *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, and *Comus* as a warrant of great things in the future, who had told his friend Diodati that he was growing "his wings for a flight," who had impressed the Italian circles with his poetic genius, became notable in England and in contemporary Europe by the fierceness of his Latin invective in polemic pamphlets and books. Poetry was laid aside to enable him to plunge into the politics of the time with all the power of his pen. His zeal in the performance of what he believed to be his duty and his undoubted success in what he did cannot but be admired, but to-day these efforts that cost him years of labor and his precious eyesight are all waste product.

Immediately upon his return from Italy he emerged into public attention by his pamphleteering. Between 1641 and 1643 he fulminated against the Episcopal church government in five pamphlets. His unhappy marriage inspired another series advocating divorce for incompatibility of temper. The death of the king and the shocked and stunned public inspired one of the most notable of his prose works, the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, and, coming at a time when the Commonwealth most needed defenders, earned him the office of Latin Secretary to the Council of State. The *Defensio Regia* of the noted Latinist Salmasius inspired Milton's long *Defense of the English People* and involved him in a tedious literary quarrel. He was warned that his failing eyesight could not stand the strain, but with a belief in the great importance of his cause he persisted until he was entirely blind. He continued in his office, however, aided by deputies, and wasted his strength in long Latin messages to foreign powers up to the very close of Cromwell's reign. He was dismissed by General Monk in April, 1659, and a few months later, when the king returned, Milton went into hiding to save his life. The Act of Oblivion allowed him to emerge, a blind man over fifty years old, to take up the aspirations of his young manhood.

Even more sharp in their effects upon the man must have been the unhappiness of his private life during these years. In May of 1643 he wooed and won Mary Powell, the seventeen-year-old daughter of a gay Cavalier squire. A few months sufficed to show them both that they had made a great mistake. The light, careless girl could not bear the atmosphere of seriousness and

quiet in which Milton was accustomed to live, and Milton on his part could not appreciate the whims and fancies of his young wife. Even before their honeymoon was well over, she fled to her parents' home and refused to return to Milton. Although later a formal reconciliation took place and she resumed her position in his house, the unhappiness of their married life must have weighed cruelly on them both. Of their marriage, three girls and a boy were born, the boy dying in infancy and the girls surviving to maturity. In March of 1646, Milton's devoted father died and was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate. Milton's love for his father was intense and his acknowledgment of his father's care was always spontaneous and complete, so that this death must have affected him strongly. In 1652 his wife died, leaving him with three small girls. Although their married life had long been loveless, her death must have made some strong impression upon him. The gradual approach of blindness during these years made him helpless, a condition from which a man of such strong nature might especially suffer. In 1656 he married again, a Katherine Woodcock, of whom nothing is known except the testimony of Milton's fondness in his sonnet *On his Deceased Wife*, written after her death in 1657. In 1658 and 1659 the Commonwealth was tottering to its fall and all that Milton had done must have seemed to him lost. He dictated and published a perfect frenzy of pamphlets, remaining to the last true to his principles and trying to check by arguments at times almost incoherent in their earnestness the rising tide of royalism. June 16, 1659, an order was issued by the House of Commons for his arrest, and a few months later two of his pamphlets were burned by royal decree.

The fall of the Commonwealth spelled for Milton the ruin of what he had for twenty years labored to support. The loss of three fourths of his fortune and of his office of Latin Secretary could not have affected a man of his nature so much as the overthrow of all that structure which politically, socially, and religiously represented his ideal. With singleness of purpose and devotion of heart and mind he had spent twenty years of his life and had irretrievably destroyed his eyesight in the support of the Commonwealth, and suddenly, within a single year, this Commonwealth was swept away and replaced by the open and shameless evils of the Restoration. It was a bitter and disappointed man who turned from a consideration of the wreck of his hopes to pick up the threads of his youthful ambitions of twenty years before.

He then threw all the energy of his strong nature into the work of poetry. *Paradise Lost* had been planned and actually begun before the fall of the Commonwealth, but his work upon it had been subject to continual interruptions. He resumed the composition of that poem. To overcome the terrible handicap of blindness he hired attendants to read to him and trained his daughters to pronounce for him the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages in which so much that he needed was written. His trials were severe. His daughters, forced against their will to the daily task of reading, gradually lost their natural feelings of respect and love. They conspired with the servants to cheat him at the market, they secretly sold his books, they deserted him when he most needed them, they stooped to every mean and petty device to escape their hated tasks. Milton is, of course, not blameless in this sordid picture, for the tasks he imposed upon them were wholly unsuited to the character and abilities of the girls. The domestic tragedy was closed about 1663. Milton in that year married Elizabeth Minshull, a capable, active woman of twenty-five who devoted herself to making him comfortable. Shortly afterwards the daughters, for whom conditions had become unbearable, were sent forth to learn embroidery as a means of earning their livelihood. Few people visited the gloomy house and those few — as Andrew Marvel and Thomas Ellwood the Quaker — he often utilized to read to him or to write from his dictation. Through such unhappiness as this he pressed on to the completion of his epic. In the spring of 1665 he handed the manuscript to Ellwood, "bidding me take it home with me, and read it at my leisure, and when I had so done, return it to him with my judgment thereupon."

*Paradise Lost* was published by Samuel Symons, printer, and the contract, April 27, 1667, between poet and publisher is still preserved in the British Museum. Milton was to receive five pounds down, a second five when the first edition of thirteen hundred copies was exhausted, a

third five when the second edition was exhausted, and a fourth five when the third edition was exhausted. The first edition was in the hands of the public in the autumn of 1667. At the time of his death, Milton had actually received ten pounds under this contract.

It is conventional to cite the reception of Milton's epic as an example of the neglect accorded to a great work upon its appearance, but the sale of thirteen hundred copies of such a poem in less than a year and a half shows a reasonably wide circle of readers. Its publication restored his fame among a generation with whom he had become almost a stranger. His house became the resort of the notables of the time, his group of friends broadened, his eminence as man of letters and poet was acknowledged.

In the mean while, he did not cease from his labors upon the publication of *Paradise Lost.* A remark of Ellwood when he returned the manuscript to the poet — "Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?" — is said to have started him upon the composition of *Paradise Regained.* This sequel to *Paradise Lost,* together with *Samson Agonistes,* was published in the autumn of 1670.

His years were numbered now, but his work continued, although, except for the editions of his early poems, he published no more poetry. He issued his Latin letters to his foreign friends, he labored over a Compendium of Theology, a History of Britain, and a new type of geography textbook. He could not bear to be idle.

His life during these latter years was simple. His daughters had left him in 1669 and the modest household consisted of himself, his wife, a single maidservant, and an amanuensis who came in by day. One account tells how Milton "used to sit in a gray, coarse cloth coat, at the door of his house in Bunhill Fields, in warm, sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air; and so, as well as in his room, received the visits of people of distinguished parts as well as quality"; and another tells us how he "rose commonly in the summer at four, and in the winter at five in the morning. . . . At his first rising he had usually a chapter read to him out of the Hebrew Bible; and he commonly studied all the morning till twelve." It was a quiet, sober, regular household in which Milton passed his last years.

Milton died November 8, 1674, of gout. He was buried on the 12th in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, beside his father.

## JOHN DRYDEN

A FEW years before Milton's death, he was visited by a young poet of rising renown who requested Milton's permission to put *Paradise Lost* into rhyme for public performance as an opera. Milton granted the request with a contemptuous, "Yes, you may tag my verses." This meeting between John Milton and John Dryden has a peculiar interest in setting before us the sharp contrast between the aged giant of an age that had passed and the vigorous young representative of the new age. Dryden's character suffers from the contrast. The stern and inflexibly moral Puritan, faithful to his religious and political principles amid the ruin of all that he had labored to upbuild, compels our admiration, whereas the pliant and morally loose Dryden, with weak political and religious convictions, adapting himself to the changing spirit of his time, lays himself open to charges of hypocrisy and time-serving.

John Dryden was born in the little village of Aldwincle, in Northamptonshire, August 9, 1631. His family was a notable one in the country, his grandfather being Sir Erasmus Dryden, Bart., and his mother, Mary Pickering, the daughter of the Reverend Henry Pickering, pastor of Aldwincle All Saints'. His childhood was passed amid Puritan influences, for both his father's and mother's family sided with the Parliament.

Of his youth we know little. He studied at the famed Westminster School in London and matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1650. We catch only two fleeting glimpses of him at college, on one occasion when he was disciplined for "disobedience" and "contumacy," and on another when he received his bachelor's degree in 1654. There is some ground for believ-

ing that he did not look back with pleasure upon his own university career, for in later years he seems actually to have preferred Oxford to his own university: —

> Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
> Than his own mother university.

Dryden's father died in 1654 and Dryden's share of the estate has been estimated to have yielded him the equivalent to-day of a thousand dollars a year. He was thus, at an early age, freed from the fear of starvation while he sought to make a place for himself in literature.

Dryden left the university some time between 1654 and 1658 and went to London. His family's politics and the ascendancy of Cromwell would naturally lead the stranger to ally himself with the Puritans, and we know that at first he was under the patronage of his uncle, Sir Gilbert Pickering, a great favorite with Cromwell, and that upon Cromwell's death he actually wrote his notable heroic stanzas on the *Death of His Late Highness Oliver, Lord Protector*. His sojourn in London as a bookseller's hack, however, threw him into contact with men of royalist sympathies. The prominent writers of the day were all Cavaliers. Hobbes, Cowley, Herrick, Denham, the fickle Waller, and the preëminent Davenant all looked forward to a restoration of literary taste with a restoration of Charles. Dryden's religious and political convictions, never apparently very deep, speedily succumbed to his environment and he celebrated the return of Charles in three poems (*Astræa Redux, To His Sacred Majesty, To My Lord Chancellor*) between 1660 and 1662.

By birth, by nature, and by education Dryden was fitted to associate with the aristocracy of the time, and his change of politics threw him among the Cavalier nobles. His status was fully established by his marriage, in 1663, to Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of a royalist earl. Dryden never refers to his wife with any special marks of affection, and he is known to have carried on a long intrigue with the actress Anne Reeve, but there is no decisive proof that the marriage and his mode of life were different from those of other men of fashion in his age. Three sons were born of this marriage and survived to maturity.

Dryden made his bid for literary fame in the field of the drama, not apparently because he felt a special inspiration toward that literary form, but because he foresaw with the return of Charles a demand for plays. For twenty years, until 1681, he wrote almost solely for the stage, achieving great success. His *Conquest of Granada* and *All for Love* stand foremost among the plays of their respective types. During this period he also produced his greatest prose works of criticism, of importance now, not because of the principles set forth, but because of the prose style. In his critical essays is found the beginning of modern clear vigorous simple prose.

His success during these years established his fame and financial position on seemingly sure foundations. He was elected (1662) a member of the Royal Society; he was, at the king's recommendation, given the degree of Master of Arts by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1668; he became (1668) a shareholder in the King's Company, agreeing to supply to the company three plays a year; he was appointed (1670) Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal; he was given a pension of one hundred pounds a year; he was recognized throughout England as the most eminent man of letters of the day, and must have been in receipt of an annual income equivalent to-day to fifteen thousand dollars. His personal associates were among the most conspicuous literary men of the court circles.

At the age of fifty, Dryden turned from the field in which he had achieved his success to write poetry. In the dedication to *Aureng-Zebe* (1676) he hints at the change: "I never thought myself very fit for an employment where many of my predecessors have excell'd me in all kinds; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy. Some little hopes I have yet remaining, and those, too, considering my abilities, may be vain, that I may make the world some part of amends for many ill plays, by an heroic poem." The "heroic poem" to which he alludes was never written, but upon the poetry which he produced after 1680 rests his reputation to-day as one of the leading English poets.

According to tradition, Dryden received from Charles personally the encouragement to take

up the cudgels of party strife in England. Party feeling was intense. A great Popish plot had been unearthed in 1678; the Whigs, led by the Earl of Shaftesbury, stood in opposition to the Tories, led by Charles himself: the question at issue was the English throne, the Whigs favoring the exclusion of the Duke of York for the Duke of Monmouth, and Charles using his influence and French subsidies to favor his brother, the Duke of York. Civil war seemed imminent. In March of 1681 Charles dissolved the Oxford Parliament and appealed to the nation. On the charge of high treason the Earl of Shaftesbury was arrested and confined in the Tower of London. In November his case was taken up by the London grand jury. Just a week before the decision in Shaftesbury's case appeared Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, the finest political satire in English. Absalom represented the Duke of Monmouth, Achitophel was Shaftesbury, and Zimri was the Duke of Buckingham.

Dryden's entrance into politics was the signal for attacks by the Whig writers. Envy had been busy with his career before, but partisanship added a new sting to the utterances of the poetasters. Goaded by the scurrilous lines of a former friend, Shadwell, Dryden in the autumn of 1682 published *MacFlecknoe*, in which he pilloried Shadwell before the London world as the heir to the abilities of a dull and stupid Irishman by the name of Flecknoe. For biting satire this short poem has no equal. Shadwell lives in literature to-day by virtue of Dryden's attack.

In sharp contrast to the violence of these satires appeared from Dryden's pen in 1682 *Religio Laici*, a defense of the doctrines of the Established Church from the layman's standpoint. This didactic poem, called by Scott one of the most admirable poems in English, was written in a style very effective for its purpose, simple and almost conversationally easy-going. Its view of religion is that of the ordinary Englishman. Its arguments are not novel or deep, it shows no grand inspiration or power of thought, but it reveals a kindly, honest nature endowed with much sound common sense.

It is curious that this worldly poet and man of letters should have lived to be fifty before his interest in the pregnant political and religious problems of his time developed, but our wonder is stirred by the versatility of the man in his poetic treatment of them. In his youth and young manhood he had written a few poems; then for twenty years he devoted himself to the stage, and when over fifty he turns to political and religious discussion and produces unrivaled satirical and didactic poetry.

February 6, 1685, Charles II, Dryden's patron and friend, died, and James II, an avowed Catholic, took the throne. The influence of the king and of his supporters in spreading Catholicism reached Dryden among the first. Never steadfast in his convictions, Dryden was early converted, and in the very year that James acceded to the throne, Dryden professed the Catholic faith. This easy thinker, bred up in Puritan surroundings, converted to the Established Church and the Cavalier movement at the first contact with the London world, now with easy grace adopted the professed faith of the new court circles. Excuses a-plenty have been offered for him, — for example, lack of any real religious emotion and hence a failure to attribute any importance to the change; sincere conversion to Catholic tenets as proved by his not changing back to the Established Church after the Revolution of 1688, — but they are not convincing. The stigma of time-serving has clung to Dryden to this day.

A curious immediate literary result of his conversion was the long poem *The Hind and the Panther* (April, 1687) in which the gentle Catholic Church (the Hind) discusses divinity with the fierce Church of England (the Panther). The contrast of attitude between this poem and the *Religio Laici*, published five years before, brings inevitably to mind the somewhat similar contrast at the beginning of his career between his verses to Cromwell and his subsequent welcome to the restored Charles.

To a certain extent Dryden's character was retrieved by the events following the Revolution of 1688. His well-known professed Catholicism caused him to be deprived of all the official positions and pensions he had enjoyed under Charles II and James II. He had the bitterness of seeing the laureateship pass to Shadwell, whom he had held up to ridicule in *MacFlecknoe*. He himself, living the life of his circle, had saved nothing. At the age of fifty-seven he was

thrown wholly on his own resources. He naturally worked the harder with his pen to earn his livelihood.

His chief productions of these latter years are his translations and his fables. No man was better fitted than he to render the Latin classics into English verse. Juvenal, Persius, selections from Ovid, and the complete works of Virgil kept him engaged until 1697. His work was the success that was to be expected. His translation of Virgil is still the standard.

In 1700 he published *Fables, Ancient and Modern*. These were tales from Chaucer and Boccaccio paraphrased in modern English. The success of this book was immediate. *Theodore and Honoria*, paraphrased from Boccaccio, has been assigned a high place in poetry.

With this triumph Dryden's career closed. On May 1, 1700, only a few months after the publication of the fables, he died. With appropriate ceremony he was buried in Westminster Abbey near the graves of Chaucer and Cowley.

In poetry, Dryden was preëminent as a satirist, and it is by his poetry that he ranks to-day as the greatest man of letters of the Restoration period. In his plays, notable as they are, he is matched by a number of his contemporaries; in his odes and occasional poems he is far excelled by the poets of the Romantic movement, but in his satires he is without a rival in English literature. His perfection of versification, its variety now vigorous and epigrammatic and again easy and flowing; his attitude of studied and polished contempt, not bursting with an assumed righteous indignation like the classical Romans, but marked with the cool scorn of a superior to his inferior; his careful identification of individual and type, thus losing nothing of the personal bite and force and gaining much of dignity and perpetual interest; his mastery of invective; his manipulation of argument — these qualities raise *Absalom and Achitophel* and *MacFlecknoe* into a class by themselves.

## ALEXANDER POPE

Alexander Pope was born May 21, 1688, the year of the bloodless revolution that placed William of Orange on the English throne. His father, Alexander Pope, was a prosperous linen merchant of London, and, in religion, a stanch Catholic. His mother, Edith Turner, was one of the seventeen children of a Yorkshire gentleman. The child inherited from his parents, who were forty-six years old at his birth, the double curse of a deformed body and a feeble constitution. Throughout his whole life his career was marked by the morbid sensitiveness to praise or blame and by the nervous irritability of temper that so often accompany physical weaknesses or peculiarities.

Pope's youth and education were strongly affected by his family's religious faith. Catholics were at the time forbidden public worship, were barred from public office, and were socially handicapped. As a child of Catholic parents, Pope could not have the benefits of the great schools of England. Eton, Westminster, and the like were closed to him, and the universities likewise. He was taught for a while by a priest, for a while in a small private school in London; but from a very early age he educated himself by omnivorous reading, lightly in philosophy, theology, and the languages, deeply in literature and poetry.

His ambition to be a man of letters, a poet, was fully formed at a very early age, and developed with no deviations through his whole life. His ultimate triumph was an example of the power of intellect over physical, political, and social obstacles. He rose to be the acknowledged poet of England, the man whose work was the dominating influence in his time.

The period was really a period of prose. The clear, easy style begun by Dryden flowered in Addison's essays, Swift's satires, Fielding's stories, Gibbon's history, and Burke's speeches. The poetry, in comparison with that of great inspirational ages, seems prosaic. It was witty, clever, ornate, correct, but lacked the enthusiastic fire of the Elizabethan age or the high moral spirit of the Miltonic. The tendency in poetry was toward the didactic and satirical verse rather than the lyrical, the epic, or the dramatic.

Pope's earliest work worth attention was written and published when he was in his teens. These "Pastorals," modeled upon Theocritus and Virgil according to the fast-dying fashion of the time, hardly deserve attention except for the evidence they bear as to their author's precocity. They comply with the poetic conventions and refer to nymphs, and swains, Daphnis, Damon, Sylvia, Delia, Colin, Daphne, etc., but they are artificial forms, cold and uninteresting.

Of far greater importance were the *Essay on Criticism*, written in 1709 and published two years later, and the *Rape of the Lock*, written and published in 1711 and 1712. By these two poems Pope gained at a stroke a commanding place among the poets of his time. The *Essay on Criticism*, was applauded by his contemporaries as a masterpiece. They marveled at the wisdom, taste, and metrical skill of the new poet, as exhibited in this review of the art of poetry as set forth in Horace, Boileau, and the classicists of the 18th century. An unusual number of its lines and phrases have, by their perfection of expression, become a part of our store of aphorisms, as "To err is human, to forgive divine," "A little learning is a dangerous thing," "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," etc.

The second of these early works stands far higher in our estimation to-day. The *Rape of the Lock* is unique in our literature. It is a trifle, to be sure, based on a quarrel between a maid of honor and a courtier who, without permission snipped off a lock of her hair, but the incident is so exquisitely handled, the treatment is so polished, witty, and vivacious that its popularity has persisted. In his long mock-heroic poem, Pope satirizes the court life of the time, revealing the mannerisms of society and giving to us of a later age a lively picture of the card-playing, tea-drinking, dresses, parties, and other frivolities which occupied the days of the society beaux and belles.

One other publication of this early period of Pope's development deserves mention. The *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* and *Eloisa to Abelard*, which both appeared in 1717, remain Pope's chief poems of a sentimental type. They are technically perfect, with that same perfection which is one of the most marked characteristics of all of Pope's poetry, and are vivid in their portrayal of pathetic situations. They never, however, rise from pathos to tragedy; it seems as though the artist in Pope overcame the emotional inspiration, for we always seem to discern beneath the cleverly treated situations the moving finger of the author.

Pope's prominence gained by these poems brought him into immediate contact with some of the chief figures of his age. Still a young man — he was less than thirty upon the publication of *Eloisa to Abelard* — he had every prospect of a long, successful, and happy career, but his acutely sensitive nature prevented. His personal history from the first days of his literary renown is a wearisome and disgusting succession of petty squabbles and intrigues. Much can be excused the morbidly irritable cripple, but his character can never be wholly cleared from the meannesses, the vanities, the personal spites and fits of ill-temper, the unworthy jealousies that stain his relations with his fellow authors. He alienated his friends and gave weapons to his enemies by his quarrel with the easy-natured Addison, by his attacks upon the poet Dennis, by his abnormal sensitiveness to well-intentioned criticism, by his shameless falsehoods and subterfuges where he saw an opportunity to increase his reputation for brilliancy or precocity, by his inadequate acknowledgment of the assistance of his collaborators in the translation of the Odyssey, by his conspiracy to have his correspondence published and his subsequent attacks upon the publisher. During all the years of his literary supremacy the sordid record of his weaknesses and littlenesses runs parallel.

In the flush of his early success, Pope was encouraged to undertake the great task of rendering Homer into English verse. His friends helped along the subscription list. He took his task with great seriousness and put his best effort into it. The project must have been suggested about 1713 and the last volume of the Odyssey appeared in 1726, so that for a dozen years he gave his time undividedly to his work. His success was immediate. Johnson calls the rendering "the noblest version of poetry the world has ever seen," and succeeding critics have acknowledged the force and liveliness of its style. The pecuniary reward which Pope received was enormous,

estimated to have been about nine thousand pounds. Being by nature a parsimonious man, he was by this single work established for life in an independent financial position.

Pope was now at the very pinnacle of his fame. Johnson, deriving his information from a "domestic of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life," thus describes his person and habits: "His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid. By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered that his life was a 'long disease.' . . . He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help."

Shortly after the publication of the last volume of his Homer, Pope entered the ranks of English satirists with his *Dunciad* (the epic of the Dunces). This poem may have had its inception in a little group of wits comprising Swift, Atterbury, Gay, Parnell, and Pope who formed the Scriblerus Club and planned a monumental satirical work upon stupidity paraded as learning. The club never had any definite organization and, of course, never accomplished its huge purpose: Pope's *Dunciad* is but a small contribution inspired by the original design; Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was another, the greatest issue of the Scriblerians.

The *Dunciad* is a venomous satire upon those of his contemporaries who had antagonized him or failed to appreciate his genius. It is redeemed from oblivion to-day by the pungency, force, and brilliancy of his lines. Though we cannot but regret that a man of such ability should use it in such an unworthy way, we are again and again compelled to admire the courage and force with which he attacks the enemies of genius.

In his *Essay on Man*, written between 1730 and 1734 at the instigation and encouragement of the famous ex-statesman, Bolingbroke, Pope laid himself open to comparison with Milton. His effort was to

> vindicate the ways of God to man, —

to put before his readers a harmonious view of the universe. Pope suffers from the comparison he has courted. Milton clothed his justification of the universe in concrete figures and lent life to his poem: Pope, obtaining a logical framework perhaps from Bolingbroke, in prosaic verse elucidates general views of man's relation to the universe, of the nature and state of man with respect to himself as an individual, of the nature and state of man with respect to society, and of the nature and state of man with respect to happiness.

As is the case with his other works, this poem won immediate recognition and renown. Abroad, Voltaire warmly eulogized Pope's philosophy. At home, the poem was accepted widely as the last word in contemporary thought. To-day, we read the *Essay* for the many purple patches, the exquisitely perfect phrases, lines, or couplets that seem the final expression of certain universal ideas; as, —

> Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
>
> Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
> The proper study of Mankind is Man.
>
> Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
> As, to be hated, needs but to be seen.

Of Pope's philosophy, except as it is an embodiment of the feelings and ideas of his time, we take no account.

The poems now known as *Moral Essays* were written at different periods of Pope's life, one as early as 1715, and seem to have been intended to be a part of a very long poem. The *Essay on*

*Man* was to be the first book; other books were to treat of knowledge, of government, and of morality, and the concluding book was to contain epistles upon the cardinal virtues. As they stand at present, the *Moral Essays* are mere fragments.

Of greater importance during these latter years were Pope's *Satires*. Encouraged by a chance remark of Bolingbroke, that the first satire of the second book of Horace would suit the poet's style, Pope translated it, published it (1733), and achieved immediate success. He followed this with other imitations of Horace between 1734 and 1738.

The *Satires* really show Pope at his best. "The best way of learning to enjoy Pope," says Leslie Stephen, "is to get by heart the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. That epistle is . . . his Apologia. In its some four hundred lines he has managed to compress more of his feelings and thoughts than would fill an autobiography." These satires, especially the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* which is their prologue, do in truth have Pope's usual technical excellence combined with an internal unity which many, indeed most, of his poems lack. Horace and Pope had so much in common that the English poet succeeded beyond others in adopting the former's style. His own sympathies and antipathies warm and vivify the concrete illustrations he introduces. Illusive as some of the references are, they become endowed with interest once they are connected with known experiences in Pope's own life.

Pope's last years were spent at his little villa in Twickenham. Upon the death of his father in 1718, he had acquired this little villa on the Thames, with its grounds of about five acres in extent. The picture of his life there is interesting, illustrating as it does the character and habits of the man. With him was his mother, to whom he was tenderly devoted, and, after about 1730, Martha ("Patty") Blount, long a dearly loved friend. He took an unusual interest in landscape gardening and spent much time in developing his miniature estate according to the artificial tastes of the period. His obelisks, little pseudo-Grecian temples, and fantastic grottoes have aroused the patronizing merriment of critics ever since.

Early in 1744 his feeble body began to show unmistakable signs of the final failure. His friends attended him faithfully; Bolingbroke, Hooke, Spence, Warburton, and the faithful "Patty" Blount waited upon him anxiously. Even on his deathbed he retained the abnormal self-consciousness which had been his through life. "Here I am, like Socrates, dispensing my morality amongst my friends just as I am dying," he said, and, when the suggestion was made that a priest be sent for, "I do not suppose that is essential, but it will look right." On May 30, 1744, he died. On account of his profession of the Roman Catholic faith, he could not be accorded the honor he deserved of a place in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. In deference to his own wish he was buried in a vault in Twickenham Church near a monument erected to his parents.

## WILLIAM COLLINS

It is the fashion to-day to rank Collins above his contemporary, Thomas Gray, as the greatest lyric poet of the middle of the eighteenth century. The neglect which he suffered while he was alive is thus atoned by his posthumous fame. The *Persian Eclogues* gained no recognition at their birth, and the *Odes* but little, so we swing the pendulum far the other way and by somewhat of overpraise contemn with the importance of discoverers the lack of taste and discernment of our forefathers.

William Collins was born on Christmas Day, 1721, in the town of Chichester. His family was of some local importance, his father, a wealthy hatter, being mayor of the town. After studying at the prebendal school in Chichester, Collins was entered, in January, 1733, at Winchester College. Even at this early age he began to compose verse, actually publishing at the age of thirteen a sixpenny pamphlet on *The Royal Nuptials*. No copy of this youthful production has been preserved. In his seventeenth year, 1738, he composed the *Persian Eclogues* (later entitled *Oriental Eclogues*), but did not publish them until later. In the mean time (1739)

he contributed to *The Gentleman's Magazine* some verses (*To a Lady Weeping*) which excited the admiration of Dr. Johnson.

In 1740 he was admitted as a commoner at Queen's College, Oxford, but in 1741 he entered Magdalen College as a demy, i.e., as a student receiving a certain allowance from the college funds for the prosecution of his studies. During the first years of his college career (1742) his *Persian Eclogues* were published, a small volume of four poems containing about three hundred lines, but they attracted little attention at the time. "In his maturer years," records his friend Joseph Warton, "he was accustomed to speak very contemptuously of them, calling them his Irish Eclogues, and saying they had not in them one spark of Orientalism. . . . He was greatly mortified that they found more readers and admirers than his *Odes*." They are correct according to the metrical standard of the type, but impress us as being somewhat tame and artificial. His fame at the present day does not rest on these.

In November, 1743, he received his bachelor's degree at Oxford, and shortly afterwards published his *Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his Edition of Shakespeare*, being a short review of the progress of poetry from nation to nation, and praising Shakespeare as the greatest of world poets. In 1744 he left Oxford for good. His career there is commonly said to have been marked by "genius and indolence," but his indolence is hardly consistent with his thorough knowledge of the classics and his acquaintance with French, Italian, and Spanish. We know of his affectionate intimacy with the Warton brothers during his college years and of his friendship with Gilbert White. The last-named says: "As he brought with him, for so the whole turn of his conversation discovered, too high an opinion of his school acquisitions, and a sovereign contempt for all academic studies and discipline, he never looked with any complacency on his situation in the university, but was always complaining of the dulness of a college life." Probably, like many other youths, his time was less occupied with the work in the curriculum than with reading and study more to his taste outside.

He gravitated naturally to London, where in the center of literary life he might reasonably anticipate success. He was young, ambitious, energetic, his head filled with large plans, as for example a *History of the Revival of Learning*, a tragedy or two, a version of Aristotle's *Poetics*. He had a small patrimony for his support. Unhappily with his precocious abilities were combined irresolution and a tendency toward dissipation. Of his great projects, none was finished; of the few that were actually begun, none proceeded beyond the stage where a few notes were made. Johnson, who met Collins about this time, records his impressions of the young poet: "His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful. . . . He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy; and by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of elysian gardens."

Johnson records that during these early years in London, "he wrote now and then odes and other poems, and did something, however little." Apparently his mind was incapable of bending continuous energy to longer compositions than these odes. They remain to-day, these "odes and other poems," the work that has gained him a lasting fame as a lyrist. They appeared December 12, 1746, and won for themselves no general recognition at the time. Tradition records his bitter disappointment at what seemed to be his failure. He burned the unsold copies and threw himself into dissipation and excesses. His ambition disappeared, his indolence and irresolution increased upon him, his strength was undermined. He was raised beyond the danger of poverty by a bequest of two thousand pounds in the will of his uncle, Colonel Martyn, who died in 1749. He left London and returned to live in Chichester with his sister. Only a few other poems issued from his pen — his *Elegy on Thompson* and *Dirge in Cymbeline* in 1749 and the *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands* in 1750. He gradually sank into a hopeless state of nervous depression which at times passed into acute insanity.

Collins lived nine years after this. Part of the time he was confined in a madhouse at Oxford, and his incarceration there in one of his attacks is sadly related by his friend Gilbert White: "How he got down to Oxford, I do not know; but I myself saw him under Merton wall, in a very affected situation, struggling and conveyed by force, in the arms of two or three men, towards the parish of St. Clement, in which was a house that took in such unhappy objects." Disraeli records a tradition that at Chichester "he would haunt the aisles and cloisters of the cathedral, roving days and nights together, loving their 'dim religious light.' And, when the choristers chanted their anthem, the listening and bewildered poet, carried out of himself by the solemn strains, and his own too susceptible imagination, moaned and shrieked, and awoke a sadness most affecting amid religious emotions." The spells of violent madness, however, were relatively infrequent: for the most part he seems to have suffered from such physical weakness as to be unable to pursue any regular occupation. He passed so completely out of the lives and remembrance of the London world that he was deemed by Johnson to have died in 1756, whereas his unnoted death did not actually occur until June 12, 1759.

A few months before Collins's death, Goldsmith had recognized his genius and had sounded his praise. Under this sponsorship, his poetry began to be read and appreciated. Johnson's harsh verdict, "He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants," was revised forthwith. Langhorne, Drake, and Hazlitt contributed their share to raising Collins to the height where he rightly belongs, the last-named drawing the comparison with Gray: "I should conceive that Collins had a much greater poetical genius than Gray: he had more of that fine madness which is inseparable from it, of its turbid effervescence, of all that pushes it to the verge of agony or rapture." His position as one of our first lyric poets seems now secure.

## THOMAS GRAY

Thomas Gray was born in London, December 26, 1716. His father, Philip Gray, was a scrivener, or money-broker, in comfortable circumstances. He was a moody, irascible man, whose temper when aroused drove him to a condition bordering on insanity. It is conceivable that the lack of poise and balance of the father's character was reproduced in the physical lassitude and settled mental melancholy that oppressed the son through his whole life. Gray's mother, Dorothy Antrobus, belonged to a good middle-class English family. Robert and John Antrobus, her brothers, were Cambridge graduates and, later, tutors at Eton; Anna Antrobus, her sister, had married a prosperous lawyer, Jonathan Rogers.

The circumstances of Gray's childhood and youth were such as to confirm any tendencies toward melancholia which he might have inherited. His father took no interest in him, even refused to undertake the expense of his education. The father's attitude made it advisable to remove the child from the house, so that for a considerable part of his boyhood Gray resided at the Antrobus house with his uncle. His mother meanwhile remained with her husband until his death in 1741, although we have evidence that at one time she sought legal advice with respect to possible divorce alleging that her husband "hath used her in the most inhuman manner, by beating, kicking, punching, and with the most vile and abusive language, that she hath been in the utmost fear and danger of her life."

A new and on the whole happier period opened for Thomas Gray when in 1727 he was entered for Eton, his mother paying all the charges. Two of the friendships which Gray formed at Eton had a marked influence on his whole life. Horace Walpole, the son of the Prime Minister, and Richard West, the son of a Lord Chancellor of Ireland, formed with Gray a little triumvirate bound together by mutual sympathies, tastes, and affection. The friendship with West lasted firmly until West died of consumption, June 1, 1742; the friendship with Walpole lasted, with one short interruption, through the whole of Gray's life.

In 1734, Gray went to Cambridge, where he was joined by Walpole a year later. He does not seem to have enjoyed his college career. As a matter of fact, the settled, passive melancholy which was the most common characteristic of all his later life, had already begun to oppress his spirits. In a letter to West, who was at Oxford, he writes: ". . . Yet neither something nor nothing gives me any pleasure. When you have seen one of my days you have seen a whole year of my life; they go round and round like a blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes a progress and gets some ground: my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and to know that having made four and thirty steps more, I shall be just what I was."

The next important incident in Gray's life was his Continental tour with Horace Walpole. Gray had finished his college career at the age of twenty-two, in 1738, and at that time left Cambridge, apparently with no settled plans for the future. While he was thus drifting, Walpole asked him to go as a companion on a grand tour of the Continent, Walpole to pay all expenses but Gray to retain his entire independence of action. The two friends started on their tour at the end of March, 1739. For nearly two years and a half they ambled delightedly through the most interesting spots in France, Switzerland, and Italy. Grays seems to have been entirely lifted out of his melancholy moods by the pretty frivolities and the constant changes of scene. These months were unquestionably the happiest of his life. The trip was rudely interrupted by a quarrel between the two friends. Walpole has unselfishly assumed the blame, but the real reason probably lies in the too exclusively intimate companionship of two lads in their early twenties over so long a period of time. The quarrel was made up a few years later, in 1744, and the friendship between the two continued firm so long as Gray lived.

Gray reached London after his Continental tour September 1, 1741. Two months later his father died from gout, leaving his fortune seriously impaired by his extravagances. A year later his widowed mother and her sister Mary joined the widowed Mrs. Rogers at Stoke-Pogis in Buckinghamshire. Gray's life henceforward is intimately connected with this house at Stoke-Pogis. The three sisters lived there, and Gray, taking up his regular residence at Cambridge, visited them frequently.

Up to this time Gray's poetical talents had been known only to his few intimate friends. He now, however, began seriously to devote himself to literature. The poets of the time were few. Pope, Swift, and Thomson had finished their greatest works and had only a few more years to live; Young was just beginning his *Night Thoughts;* Collins had published his *Persian Eclogues,* but their value had not been recognized by any one.

The important poems of 1742 were the *Ode to Spring,* the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College,* and the *Hymn to Adversity.* Probably during this same period, too, was begun the famous *Elegy.* The news of West's death had reached him during one of his visits at Stoke-Pogis and had, of course, a profound effect upon his feelings at the time. Possibly the note of sadness that continually recurs in these early poems was not only the result of his own melancholy temperament, but was increased by his sorrow at his friend's untimely death. The *Eton* ode has been the favorite of his odes, expressing, as Gosse puts it, "The regret that the illusions of boyhood, the innocence that comes not of virtue but of inexperience, the sweetness born not of a good heart but of a good digestion, the elation which childish spirits give, and which owes nothing to anger or dissipation, that these qualities cannot be preserved through life." In the second stanza of this ode his sense of personal loss by the death of West is especially evident. The *Hymn to Adversity* in its cold purity of expression and its maintained elevation of style is truly Miltonic. To our retrospective glance, the *Eton* ode and the *Hymn to Adversity* established the fact at once that Gray was the compeer of all the poets of his day.

At Cambridge, Gray indulged his tastes for classical reading and study. He became more and more absorbed in his studies, living the life of a recluse, only vibrating between Cambridge and Stoke-Pogis. He planned great things, but his plans all came to naught. He studied the whole literature of ancient Greece; he planned a critical text of Strabo and actually made some notes for the purpose; he planned likewise a text of Plato, and made notes for it; he thought of a Greek anthology; he intended to publish a text of Aristotle; — all that we have of these projected

works are scattered and almost incoherent notes. He withdrew more and more into himself, wrapped up in his studies, but never arriving anywhere. He passed his thirtieth year; his *Eton* ode was published, but attracted no attention at the time; he was wholly unknown to fame and perfectly willing so to be.

The year 1750 is notable as the year in which he finished the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. He seems to have laid it aside after beginning it in 1742, and then to have been startled into renewed activity in it by his sorrow upon the sudden death of his aunt, Miss Mary Antrobus, at Stoke-Pogis in November of 1749. After finishing it, he sent it off to Walpole: "Having put an end to a thing whose beginning you have seen long ago, I immediately send it to you. You will, I hope, look upon it in the light of a thing with an end to it: a merit that most of my writings have wanted, and are like to want." The enthusiastic Walpole unintentionally caused its early publication by handing it around among his friends until a piratical publication was imminent. Its success was immediate. It went through four editions in two months and eleven within two years, not counting the numerous pirated reprints. Gray had a quixotic objection to earning any money by his poetry, so he gave the copyright to Dodsley, the printer, and never profited himself by the poem's popularity. The *Elegy* has come to be, more than any other one poem, the national English poem. Cheapened though many of its phrases and lines have been by constant quotation, it yet retains as a whole its freshness and appeal. An incident that occurred some years later — September 12, 1759 — tended further to endear it to the English: The young General Wolfe, being rowed along at night from post to post under the Heights of Abraham to see that all was ready for the attack the next morning, recited nearly all the *Elegy* and added, "I would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow."

Gray's mother died March 11, 1753. Gray was with her from the first sign of her illness in January till the end came. The effect of her loss was acute. He had been accustomed to the little home at Stoke-Pogis where he loved and was beloved by its three inmates, but with the death of his mother, the chief prop of his affections was gone. Only one of his maternal aunts was now alive, and she, a few months later, was stricken with palsy.

Beginning about 1754, Gray interested himself in a different kind of poetry, namely, odes modeled after the Pindaric plan. These, he well knew, could never be popular as was the *Elegy*; they could appeal only to poets with an intimate appreciation of the classics. He sent the first of these, *The Progress of Poesy*, from Cambridge to his friend Dr. Wharton, December 26, 1754. A second, *The Bard*, grew gradually from 1755 until May of 1757, when the music of the blind harper, John Parry, seems to have given him the needful inspiration to finish it. Horace Walpole printed the two at his private printing-press at Strawberry Hill and Dodsley published them. Their novelty gained them immediate attention and their sustained dignity and beauty gained them applause from the discerning. The multitude took their cue from the reviews and eulogized without truly understanding or appreciating. With a finer insight to-day we recognize their originality and power. No English poet has so excellently adapted the Pindaric structure in English verse and in so doing maintained an equivalent richness in imagery, dignity of expression, and sounding harmony of verse.

Gray was now acknowledged the head of the living English poets, so that it was hardly more than fitting that, upon the death of Colley Cibber at the end of 1757, the laureateship should be offered to him. This honor he refused. Upon his mother's death his financial condition was so improved that the laureate's salary was no attraction and he seems to think that he would have felt "awkward" in the office.

In 1759 his Cambridge life was interrupted for three years by the opening of the British Museum. Gray moved to London and reveled in the riches of the collection. He was planning at the time a history of English poetry and, as usual, made copious notes for the work, but like other plans, all this came to naught. All his notes he gave in 1770 to Thomas Warton.

At the end of 1762, Gray applied for the professorship of Modern History and Modern Languages at Cambridge, but was unsuccessful. He returned to Cambridge, however, and resumed

his recluse life there. His only poetical work of note during this period consisted of the few romantic lyrics adapted from Gaelic and Icelandic sources. He seems to have been attracted to the Gaelic and Icelandic early literature in his researches for his projected history of English poetry. The poems are: *The Fatal Sisters* (Norse), *The Descent of Odin* (Norse), *The Triumphs of Owen* (Gaelic), *The Death of Hoel* (Gaelic). The most notable fact about this work of Gray's was his appreciation of these rude ancient originals in an age when such appreciation was rare.

The subsequent years of Gray's life were wholly uneventful. The gout which he had inherited from his father laid him low from time to time; he took several short trips, "Lilliputian travels," he called them, once through the south of England, once to the Scottish Highlands, and once to the Cumberland lake region; he enjoyed his summer vacations in visits with his few friends and intimates; he received, in 1768, without application or endeavor on his part, the professorship he had previously wanted; he wrote, about 1769, his *Installation Ode* (now commonly entitled his *Ode for Music*) for the ceremonies attending the elevation of the Duke of Grafton to the chancellorship of the University. He had become a notable man at Cambridge, but so completely did he withdraw himself from the life and activities of the University that he was scarcely ever seen. Tradition records that, on the rare occasions when Gray issued from his rooms, the students hastily left their dinners to gaze at him, and one time when courtesy compelled him to return a formal call, the college men gathered to see him pass, removing their hats in token of respect.

In 1771, Gray succumbed to the attacks of the gout. The last attack began about the middle of July. About eleven o'clock the night of July 30, he died. He was buried without pomp or circumstance in the vault beside his mother at Stoke-Pogis.

Walpole once wrote in a letter: "He [Gray] is the worst company in the world. From a melancholy turn, from living reclusely, and from a little too much dignity, he never converses easily; all his words are measured and chosen, and formed into sentences; his writings are admirable; he himself is not agreeable." Temple called him "perhaps the most learned man in Europe," and Taine terms him "the morose hermit of Cambridge." He was in truth not an agreeable figure, not one of the well-loved poets of our literature. The complete withdrawal into the world of books forced a separation from the life of men, so that his poems, great as they are, commonly lack humanity and warmth. He was the finished artist in verse, writing *ex cathedra* down to his audience. He had elaborate learning and delicate finesse, but he was without passion. His poetry is the poetry of the intellect and not of the heart.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

We are blessed with an unusual amount of biographical material about Goldsmith. Poor "Noll"! His ungainly figure and pock-marked face, his slow tongue, improvident habits, and thoughtless gayety have been ridiculed enough by his contemporaries. "He was such a compound of absurdity, envy, and malice, contrasted with the opposite virtues of kindness, generosity, and benevolence, that he might be said to consist of two distinct souls, and influenced by the agency of a good and bad spirit," wrote Thomas Davies in his *Life of Garrick*. And yet, he was a member of the Club and consorted on familiar terms with such notables as Garrick, Reynolds, and Fox. The old Doctor was his stanch and loyal admirer, "Bozzy" recording on a number of occasions the high opinions Johnson expressed of Goldsmith's work.

Oliver Goldsmith was born in the village of Pallas (or Pallasmore), Ireland, November 10, 1728. His father, Charles Goldsmith, of English descent, was the Protestant clergyman in the poor little Irish village, and eked out his meager living by farming. His mother was the daughter of the Reverend Oliver Jones, a poor Protestant clergyman settled in a neighboring Irish community.

The Reverend Charles Goldsmith's prospects improved somewhat in 1731, for he was pre-

sented to a living in Ireland worth about two hundred pounds a year. He removed to the village of Lissoy. It is with this village that all of the poet's youthful memories are connected. He attended the village school and gained the reputation of being "a stupid, heavy blockhead," but from the master's inexhaustible fund of stories of ghosts, fairies, witches, and banshees he imbibed a romance that fed his active imagination. His life was not happy, for his squat figure, pock-marked face, and tendency to make ridiculous blunders made him the butt of his schoolfellows. In after years he saw Lissoy through the softened haze of memory and it became idealized in *The Deserted Village.*

Goldsmith's father, unable to pay his son's tuition at college, was not inclined to encourage the boy's continuance in his education, but on the advice of an uncle he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1745 as a sizar. A sizar performed in those days a few menial services, in return for which he was exempted from payment for food or tuition. His uncle aided him in paying for his poor lodgings. Whether by reason of laziness, incapacity for the studies of the curriculum, or offended pride at his position, Goldsmith did not make a good record in the college. He neglected his work, played the buffoon in the classroom, spent his time in squalid dissipation when he had the money, and was lowest on the list of those receiving the B.A. degree in 1749.

The question of what to do with this young man of twenty-one, with an education but without a profession, seems to have worried his family not a little. His father had died while the boy was wasting his time at college, and had left almost nothing for his widow's support. Goldsmith returned to his mother's house and passed the time in careless idleness, full of high spirits and practical jokes, haunting the village inn far too often for his own good. At the spur of his friends he was encouraged to try for holy orders, but his application was declined by the bishop. He was encouraged to use his university training in tutoring, and actually remained steadfast in this occupation until he had saved up thirty pounds. With this amount he set out to make his fortune only to return in a few days with nothing but an unlikely yarn of his adventures. His uncle forgave the scapegrace, gave him fifty pounds, and started him off to Dublin to study law. In no time at all he was back at home, his money gone in gambling, and his law career forgotten. Again forgiven by his uncle, he was equipped with funds and dispatched to Edinburgh, this time to study medicine. He stayed in Edinburgh eighteen months, and then proposed to his uncle that he be allowed to take a foreign tour to increase his knowl edge of his profession. Funds were provided and he set forth for Leyden (1754).

Little is known of the incidents of his foreign tour. His money was soon gone, but for two years he subsisted on the Continent wandering from place to place. Boswell speaks of his having "disputed" his way, alluding to the custom in university and monastery circles of allowing a night's lodging and entertainment to any scholar who proved his mettle in upholding a thesis in debate. He did during this time, however, actually obtain somewhere, somehow, a medical degree, with which at last he returned to England.

His family seems to have washed its hands of this good-for-nothing scion at this time. No more funds were forthcoming, and even his letters remained unanswered. He was in London, February 1, 1756, fresh from his European travels, with a medical degree, but without money, friends, or influence. His situation was desperate. He was, it is true, a university man, but he had been the last on the list; he had successively tried the church, the law, the medical profession; he had failed in everything.

After having been submerged in London poverty for a few months, so completely submerged that no researches have filled up the details, he emerged as a tutor in the school of Mr. Milner, at Peckham. There at dinner one day he met Griffiths, the bookseller. On the strength of his university training alone, apparently, Griffiths invited him to become a reviewer for Griffiths's magazine. The emoluments were board and lodging at Griffiths's house and a small but regular salary; the duties consisted of reviews of current publications; the hours were long and the amount of work demanded was very great. Truly his initiation into the world of literature was a very hard one. Goldsmith endured the conditions less than six months, then quarreled with his employer and was again in want. He moved from garret to garret in the slum districts: how

he subsisted at all remains a marvel to-day. He was thirty years old, cast off by his family, unknown to the world, in sore anxiety for his daily bread, and with no profession.

Although his attempt in literature with Griffiths had not been successful, it had made Goldsmith acquainted with the ways of the booksellers and the life of the literary hack. Such work in literature, indeed, offered the readiest chance of livelihood for a man of such habits and inclinations as Goldsmith, so he drifted into a life of intermittent hackwork for the publishers.

It is a curious fact in Goldsmith's literary career that his masterpieces were written in the hours snatched surreptitiously from his hackwork. He was almost continuously employed after 1759, but the prodigious product of his labors for the booksellers is practically forgotten now, whereas he is famous for the few poems and plays written under the urge of no contract. His *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, an endeavor to prove that criticism is and always has been the foe of literature and art, appeared in 1659; his contributions (he was the sole contributor) to Wilkie's short-lived magazine, the *Bee*, appeared in the autumn of the same year; his contributions to Smollett's *British Magazine* and to Newberry's daily newspaper, the *Public Ledger*, were spread over the next years; his papers for the *Citizen of the World*, the most famous of the immediate successors of Addison's *Spectator*, followed up to 1762; his *Life of Richard Nash*, a bookseller's task, appeared in the fall of 1762.

These works we have mentioned do not, with the exception of the *Citizen of the World*, contribute anything toward our modern estimate of Goldsmith's worth, but in their own time they gained for him the recognition of discerning men and certain friendships which made the years following the happiest of his erratic life. Johnson himself, the dictator in his contemporary world of letters, sought Goldsmith out and made him one of that circle of celebrities that formed the Club. Goldsmith became established on terms of intimacy with Hogarth, Reynolds, Burke, Beauclerk, Hawkins, and Dr. Nugent. His finances, too, improved wonderfully, although his impecuniosity never changed. His annual income has been estimated at the equivalent of two hundred pounds a year; he moved into better lodgings; he could even entertain a little, a little supper for Johnson and Percy, for example.

The story of the production of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the first of his great successes, is familiar. Boswell gives it in Johnson's own words thus: "I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit, told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

Meanwhile, Goldsmith had prepared a poem for publication. *The Traveller*, first planned as early as 1755, did not appear until 1764. It came at an auspicious moment for its author's fame. Poetry had languished in England since the supremacy of Pope. Akenside, Armstrong, Churchill, and Smollett were the most prominent names of the period; Gray wrote little and had become a confirmed recluse; Young was in his last years. Goldsmith's short poem struck a new note. Its worth, recognized at once by a select few, became gradually known to a wide circle of readers. Johnson appreciated it at once — "There has not been so fine a poem since Pope's time," he said to Boswell — and resented any implication of criticism.

Friday, January 29, 1768, Goldsmith first appeared in the rôle of dramatist with *The Good-Natur'd Man*. This little comedy, the Prologue to which was written by Johnson, achieved a fair success, and netted him financially the equivalent of about six hundred pounds. His spirits rose. He at once bought and furnished luxuriously a new suite of rooms, provided himself with servants, and entertained lavishly. He had become a "somebody" in the world, and his

optimistic, improvident nature led him to think his station secure for the rest of his life. Never did any man live more in the thought of the present day than Goldsmith.

His temporary gayety burdened him with a heavy load of debt, which in turn forced him back into hackwork for the publishers. He had not at any time been free from this. Even during the years when he was planning *The Good-Natur'd Man*, he was busy with reviews, compilations and the like to meet his current expenses. His name now had become known, however, and his value to the publishers rose accordingly. He worked assiduously (for him) on a *History of Rome* for Davies; closed a contract with Griffiths (about 1769) for a *History of Animated Nature*, to appear in eight volumes, and *A History of England, from the Birth of the British Empire to the Death of George the Second*, to appear in four octavo volumes, and a *Life of Thomas Parnell*. It must be taken into account that these books were by no means products of original research: they were adaptations, abridgments, and translations rendered in his own simple clear style at the demand of the booksellers. The amount of such work which he contracted to produce was colossal, it is true, but the pay was good, — *History of Rome*, two hundred and fifty pounds; *History of England*, five hundred pounds, for example, — and the task not difficult. The pity of it is that the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Deserted Village*, and *She Stoops to Conquer* should have used up his precious years in such work as compilation and adaptation.

His greatest success in poetry was written between whiles and appeared in 1770. *The Deserted Village* was foretold in a couplet in *The Traveller:* —

> Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call
> The smiling long-frequented village fall.

Simplicity, naturalness, sympathetic insight, and tenderness set this poem apart from the cold artificial works of the preceding age. With sure fingers, Goldsmith plays upon our memories and emotions in the portrayal of the simple rustic life in the village. The place of this poem has never in the successive changes of literary fashion been disputed. It is truly universal in its appeal.

He was freed from care and worry for a short time only. After a trip to the Continent and a whirl at social diversion, Goldsmith again had to bury himself in his writing to pay his current expenses. In the midst of the great compilations he had undertaken, however, he planned another coup to fill his purse. The play, *The Good-Natur'd Man*, had brought him a small fortune, so he tried again at a play for success. *She Stoops to Conquer*, the brilliant non-sentimental comedy, despaired of by its producer, was the result. The natural foolery of this comedy made an immediate success for it in its own day and has secured for it in English comedy a permanent place as a classic.

His last years were sad. His successes provided him with funds, but not with the wisdom to use them. His debts, instead of being removed, actually increased. He is estimated to have had during the last seven years of his life an income equivalent to eight hundred pounds a year today, which for a bachelor should have insured comfort and independence, but the improvident Goldsmith would have been poor with ten times that amount. His purse was ever open, his habits were careless and extravagant, he always spent twice what he was in prospect to receive. He proceeded to contract with the booksellers again for long compilations, in many cases receiving substantial sums in advance. The optimistic cheerfulness which had been his most prominent characteristic wore away with his continual worries — Reynolds estimated, said Dr. Johnson, that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. His long sedentary habits told on his constitution, and on March 25, 1774, he took to his bed. April 4, he died. April 9 he was privately buried in Temple Church graveyard.

"His associates," writes Macaulay, "seem to have regarded him with kindness, which, in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect."

## WILLIAM COWPER

William Cowper was born at the rectory of Great Berkhampstead, November 26, 1731. He was descended from an ancient and honorable family. His great-grandfather was Sir William Cowper, Bart.; his grandfather was a judge in the court of common pleas; his great-uncle was the Lord Chancellor under Anne and George I; his father, the Reverend John Cowper, was rector of Berkhampstead and later chaplain to George II. His mother was Anne Donne, of the same race as the poet John Donne and, according to the claim of the family, a descendant from Henry III. She died when he was but six years old. This bereavement left upon the sensitive child a feeling of irreparable loss which continued throughout his whole life.

After his mother's death, Cowper was entered in a large boarding-school. There he suffered intensely. With the brutality of boyhood, his more robust companions took various opportunities to tease and maltreat him. He speaks in later years of having been "singled out from all the other boys by a lad of about fifteen years of age as a proper object upon whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper." His experiences inspired his plea for home education instead of boarding-school education in the poem *Tirocinium*, written and published near the close of his life.

From this boarding-school, after a period of two years when he was under constant treatment for eye trouble, he was sent (1741) to Westminster. His life there was more endurable: he speaks of his skill at cricket and football and occasionally of his enjoyment of life. His education was, of course, along the classical lines regularly pursued in the schools of the time. He seems to have made no noteworthy record in his studies.

When he left Westminster in 1749 he was articled to an attorney, Mr. Chapman, to study law. After three years with Mr. Chapman, Cowper took chambers for himself in the Temple, where he desultorily read law. He finally was formally called to the Bar, but his interest never was in the profession. He spent much of his time in trying his hand at literature, associating with a little group of journalists and *littérateurs* who composed the Nonsense Club — Bonnell, Thornton, Colman, Lloyd, and others — and contributing a few papers to the *Connoiseur* and the *St. James Chronicle*. He did very little in poetry, just a few verses to the conventional "Delia" and an epistle to his friend Lloyd.

His prospects at law were abruptly terminated by an event wholly unforeseen and peculiarly terrible. When he was thirty-two years old, he was nominated to the office of Clerk of the Journals in the House of Lords. The position was one which he was fully able to fill and which would have yielded him a competency for life. For a while he devoted himself with all his powers to special study in preparation for his duties, but as the time drew near for him to make his public appearance, he fell into the deepest melancholy. He foresaw possible criticism and opposition, he felt implied hostility in every paragraph of the daily journals, even in the glances of passers-by, he could not eat or sleep, his imaginary troubles so wrought upon his mind that at the last he became insane and attempted suicide. The nomination was, of course, withdrawn as soon as his condition was known and he was placed in the private asylum of a Dr. Cotton at St. Alban's in December of 1763. There he remained, kindly cared for, for many months.

His recovery from his madness was accompanied by a sudden religious fervor. He writes of having taken up the Bible one morning and perused the third chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon in His blood, and the fulness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the Gospel."

His condition when he left the asylum was pitiful. Continuance in the law was impossible, his friends were lost, a large part of his personal funds were exhausted. His family contributed a sum sufficient to yield him a small income, and after a time, settled him in the village of Huntington.

Here began his famous friendship with Mrs. Unwin, a friendship pure and firm through all the intervening years until her death. Cowper was brought into contact with the Unwins through their mutual religious feeling. The Unwins — the Reverend William Unwin, his wife Mary, and their son and daughter — were, like Cowper, converts to the Methodist movement that was the religious sensation of the period. In his new enthusiasm, increased perhaps by his belief that he had been saved from his madness by the direct interposition of the Almighty, Cowper desired nothing more than the opportunity to live in perpetual converse with religious people upon religious subjects. Attracted to the Unwins by their similar enthusiasm, he soon became a boarder in their house. He was from the first strongly attracted toward Mrs. Unwin. "That woman is a blessing to me," he wrote, "and I never see her without being the better for her company." He describes upon another occasion his usual day: "We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate, and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval, I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but, if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. . . . At night we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are called to prayers. I need not tell you that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness, accordingly, we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren."

Less than two years after Cowper went to reside at the Unwins the Reverend William Unwin was killed by a fall from his horse. The friendship between Cowper and Mrs. Unwin, however, kept them together. They lived as companions for life. No scandal is possible with regard to their association: Cowper himself says that they were as mother and son, and Mrs. Unwin's son, a very religious man, had no misgivings with regard to the connection.

Inspired by a desire to be near the Reverend John Newton, a leader of the religious revival, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin moved to the squalid little village of Olney in Buckinghamshire. There under Newton's leadership they continued their religious devotions. Cowper wrote a number of hymns for a church hymnal and was encouraged to visit among the poor. His mode of life for the past years began again to affect his brain: he became morbid, worried about his salvation, finally believed that he was one of the doomed, and tried once more to commit suicide. For sixteen months he was out of his mind, tended all the while with the most loving care by Mrs. Unwin and Newton.

When he recovered, he sought for some congenial mental occupation to prevent a return of his disease. He was now, 1781, a man of fifty, without occupation or profession, and with a mental trouble that might at any time recur. To Mrs. Unwin he owed the suggestion that he turn to poetry. She realized that he would thus occupy his mind, but she could hardly have hoped that he would gain success and fame. It was she, too, who suggested the subjects about which he should write, but her suggestion, *The Progress of Error*, was, unhappily, tinctured with her deep religious feelings. Cowper adopted her suggestion, but the result was a failure. The volume containing this poem and *Truth*, *Table Talk*, *Expostulation*, *Hope*, *Charity*, *Conversation*, and *Retirement* appeared in 1782. The criticisms were unfavorable and in this case posterity agrees with the contemporary judgment. Outside of a few purple patches, the poems are uninspired and forced.

The subject for his great work, *The Task*, was suggested by a new friend he made at the time his first volume of poems was being prepared for the press. Lady Austen, a bright, vivacious widow, came into the village one day to shop, met Mrs. Unwin and Cowper, seemed to feel a great attraction for them, and in a short time settled in a near-by house. The three became inseparable companions: "Lady Austen and we pass our days alternately at each other's Chateau." On one occasion she told him the story of John Gilpin, much to his amusement, and the next morning he informed her "that convulsions of laughter brought on by his recollection of

her story had kept him waking during the greatest part of the night, and that he had turned it into a ballad." Of greater importance, however, was her suggestion that he try a great poem in blank verse. When asked for a subject, she suggested the sofa on which she lay. From the suggestion grew *The Task* (published 1784), its title reminding the reader that

. . . the Fair commands the song.

This poem constitutes Cowper's chief claim to a place among the leading English poets. It is indeed the poem of a sect, being a concrete expression of the Methodism of the time, but it is more than that. The sympathy he shows for the quiet secluded country life, the truth and sincere joy with which he depicts the homely pleasures of the modest home, the close and accurate observations of nature: — it is in these characteristics that Cowper struck an original note in his long poem, "a poem," says the devoted Hayley, "of such infinite variety, that it seems to include every subject, and every style, without any dissonance or disorder: and to have flowed without effort, from inspired philanthropy, eager to impress upon the hearts of all readers, whatever may lead them, most happily, to the full enjoyment of human life, and to the final attainment of heaven."

The next few years were among the happiest of his life. Although a coolness came between him and Lady Austen, her place was more than filled by his cousin, Lady Hesketh, who came to live with him at this time. He worked busily at his poetry, publishing in 1785 a volume containing a number of his better known lyrics, as *The Loss of the Royal George, The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk, The Poplar Field, The Needless Alarm, To Mary*, and beginning his longest work, the translation of Homer. The Homer was published in 1791 in two quarto volumes and the first edition was sold out in less than six months. Realizing that health of mind and body lay in continued occupation, he planned a sumptuous edition of Milton, with notes, translations of the Latin and Italian poems, illustrations, etc., but this task was never finished. He engaged himself more enthusiastically upon a revision of his translation of Homer.

With advancing years — he was now over sixty — he began again to fall into the settled melancholy that had in previous instances led to madness, and during these years his faithful companion was in no condition to aid him. Even while his strength was ebbing, Mrs. Unwin was stricken with paralysis and her mind failed. Without her Cowper sank into a pitiful state of dejection, bordering on insanity. She died in December, 1796, but Cowper was in such a mental condition that he scarcely realized she had gone. He lingered on for three wretched years, wholly dependent on the care and kindness of friends and distant relatives. He passed away peacefully April 25, 1800, at the age of sixty-eight. His grave is in St. Edmund's Chapel in Dereham Church.

## ROBERT BURNS

Although individual genius is always unique in its manifestations, most authors show marked traces of the literary influences that have surrounded them. Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Pope, and the rest reflected in their poetry the literary traditions of the age and society in which they lived. Even the immortal Shakespeare, who rose so far above his predecessors and contemporaries, is truly a child of the Elizabethan period, and a study of the development of his technical skill in the drama shows along what regular and natural lines it proceeded. Occasionally, however, a native genius, untrammeled by the fetters of contemporary literary custom or thought, flashes across the horizon. Such a genius was Robert Burns. He was, as the learned Ramsay called him, "in truth, a sort of comet in literature."

Robert Burns was born January 25, 1759, near the village of Ayr, Scotland. He was the first of the seven children of William Burns (Burness or Burnes) and Agnes Brown. William Burns, a poor farmer, was a man of strictest probity and deep piety. His poet-son has left an ineffaceable portrait of him in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. Agnes Burns was an Ayrshire woman, deeply religious as was her husband, and fond of the old Scottish songs and ballads. Burns's

lifelong reverence of the memory of his father and his provision for the care of his mother are notable traits in his character.

Burns's youth was bitterly hard. His father struggled unsuccessfully with farms at Mount Oliphant and Lochlea, and the boys, though not fully grown, were called upon for men's work. "The unceasing moil of a galley-slave," Burns called it in later years. The education of the children was not neglected, however, even in the face of poverty and constant labor. At five years of age, Robert attended the village school and a few years later his father combined with his neighbors to hire a tutor for the children. This tutor, John Murdoch, a man of exceptional intelligence, took especial pains in training his charges in grammar and rhetoric, the use and meaning of words, so that, on the authority of his younger brother, Gilbert Burns, Robert "soon became remarkable for the fluency and correctness of his expression, and read the few books that came in his way with much pleasure and improvement." We know from Burns's own account some of these *few books: The Spectator*, certain plays of Shakespeare, works of Pope, Locke's huge *Essay*, Boyle's *Lectures*, Taylor's *Doctrine of Original Sin*, the works of Allan Ramsay, the writings of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Hume, and Robertson, and, most precious of all (his *vade mecum*, Burns calls it later), a collection of songs. In his education the influence of his father must be noted. Burns testifies to the value of this when he writes, "he conversed on all subjects with us familiarly," and "was at great pains, as we accompanied him in the labors of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge or confirm our virtuous habits."

Burns's father, worn out by his futile efforts at farming, died in 1784, leaving little but debts. Robert and Gilbert had a few months previously taken a farm a few miles away at Mossgiel and there they took their mother and their younger brothers and sisters after William Burns's death.

Even before his father's death, Burns had fallen into evil company in the neighboring villages of Kirkoswold and Irvine. He had tasted the joys of dissipation and he had learned to look upon illegitimate love with a careless mind. When the farm at Mossgiel failed to alleviate his poverty, he seems to have yielded to the temptations that abounded in the neighborhood. His genius as a poet and wit was already known among his companions and made him welcome in any convivial crowd. His readiness of address made him attractive to the young women of his own social circles. Together with the unfolding of his genius as a poet during the four years at Mossgiel is to be recorded the sad story of the beginnings of his moral downfall.

Burns had begun to write his lyrics as early as his fifteenth year. Inspired then by sudden love for a partner in a harvest dance, he wrote his first poem, *Handsome Nell*, "in a wild enthusiasm of passion." "To this hour I never recollect it," said he in later years, "but my heart melts, my blood sallies at the remembrance." It was characteristic of Burns's inspiration that he wrote his best verses under circumstances similar to the above. A chance *amour*, entered upon with the abandoned enthusiasm of his ardent nature, might result in an unrivaled burst of song. "I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I once got heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart." An unhappy feature of his life was that his excesses of affection like his excesses in drink proved the ruin, not only of himself, but of others dear to him.

There is no necessity for chronicling in detail the successive *amours* of this master-lover. In November, 1784, a daughter was born to him of Elizabeth Paton and was taken into his house by his mother and tenderly nurtured. His fatherhood brought upon him the censure of his church and evoked from him a short series of satirical poems in reply — *The Twa Herds*, *Holy Willie's Prayer*, *The Ordination*, *The Holy Fair*. After a courtship extending through 1785, early in 1786 Burns and Jean Armour, the daughter of a mason in a near-by village, were secretly and irregularly married. Shortly afterwards the girl's angry father forced her to give up Burns and to destroy the evidences of her marriage. In September of the same year Jean became the mother of twin children. Even in the midst of these troubles, Burns was carrying on his *amour* with Mary Campbell, a simple, faithful Argyllshire lass who, according to one biographer, aroused in Burns the truest love he ever knew.

During the troubled months between the fall of 1784 and the spring of 1786 Burns wrote many of his best-known poems, including *The Twa Dogs, The Holy Fair, Address to the Deil, The Cotter's Saturday Night, To a Mouse, Man was Made to Mourn, To a Mountain Daisy, To a Louse, Song: Composed in August.*

The publication of his poems was undertaken in 1786 to provide Burns with funds to go to Jamaica to escape the depressing poverty at home and the legal revenge threatened by Jean Armour's father. The little volume, published by John Wilson of Kilmarnock, won immediate fame. Burns received about twenty pounds as his share of the profits of the sale, and bought steerage passage for the West Indies. Just before his ship sailed, however, he changed his plans. "I had taken the last farewell of my friends; my chest was on the way to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, '*The gloomy night is gathering fast,*' when a letter from Dr. Blackwood to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening up new prospects to my poetic ambition."

At the end of 1786 Burns went to Edinburgh to try his fortunes. His winter there was a triumph for him as a poet and the ruination of him as a man. The plowman poet was fêted and honored by the rich, the learned, and the great; he became the lion of the social circles and held his own in wit and conversation with the best in the city. But along beside his visits at the houses of the great were night gatherings in the clubs and brotherhoods of Edinburgh's taverns. In the taverns he found the people more congenial to him. There was no restraint to the raillery, the jests, and the drinking. Burns became the boon companion to the young bloods of the time, an acknowledged leader in their carousals, and indulged his wit and satire, it was said, at the expense of his more noble and dignified hosts. He was given a taste of revelries and excesses that far surpassed the dissipations of his Ayrshire valleys.

His finances improved wonderfully with an Edinburgh edition of his poems including only a few poems not in his Kilmarnock book, as *The Address to the Unco' Guid, A Winter Night,* and "*The gloomy night is gathering fast.*" It is estimated that he received in all about five hundred pounds at this time, enough, anyway, to lend his brothers one hundred and eighty pounds and to take a trip himself among the Scottish Highlands. His return to the incessant toil of his Mossgiel farm accentuated the difference between the Edinburgh life and the condition to which he was born. He became dissatisfied and moody, restlessly unhappy under the conditions and restricted gayeties at Mossgiel. In this spirit he returned to Edinburgh for the winter of 1787–88.

If he looked for the repetition of his former reception, as he probably did, he was bitterly disappointed. His day of glory was over. Gentlemen no longer counted his company; society no longer dined and entertained him; the learned no longer inclined to engage him in sallies of wit and discussion. Burns was practically ignored. The effect upon him was lamentable. He became embittered against the rich and the great and relieved his feelings by excesses in the taverns where he still was welcome. He may have thought of preferment in office when he returned to Edinburgh, but his hopes were quickly undeceived and his anger increased. The favor and smiles of these people of influence had, after all, meant nothing. In the spring of 1788 he bought with his remaining funds a farm at Ellisland, near Dumfries, and married Jean Armour, apparently resolved to return to his native occupation and give up the life of the city.

His farm at Ellisland was, as the factor who rented it told him, a poet's choice and not a farmer's, so that, for the support of his growing family, he applied for and obtained a position as exciseman for his district, yielding him a salary of fifty pounds a year. His duties took him over a district roughly fifty miles square and compelled him to ride fully two hundred miles a week. He felt keenly the stigma attached to his office, but seems to have performed his task creditably. The journeys necessary for his excise business, however, kept him away from his farm for long periods and hastened the utter failure of his hopes in that direction.

Meanwhile, the springs of song did not fail within him. When he was in Edinburgh he met James Johnson, who was collecting a *Musical Museum* of the songs of Scotland. Burns had enthusiastically coöperated with Johnson in his work, aiding by his knowledge of Scottish tradition, by his criticism (Burns was practically the editor of the collection from 1788 until his

health began to fail), and especially by the contribution of his own songs. During the whole of his Ellisland residence he continued to send songs to Johnson, until he was represented in the *Museum* by one hundred and eighty-four pieces. Included among these were: *A Rosebud by my Early Walk, The Silver Tassie, Of a' the Airts, My Heart 's in the Highlands, John Anderson, my Jo, Thou Lingering Star, Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut, Ae Fond Kiss, The Banks o' Doon, The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman, The Lovely Lass of Inverness, A Red, Red Rose, Auld Lang Syne, Comin' Thro' the Rye.* During the last months of his stay at Ellisland he composed his famous narrative poem, *Tam o' Shanter.* This, not being a song, was not contributed to Johnson, but appeared independently.

The hopelessness of the attempt at farming at Ellisland led Burns finally to move his family (end of 1791) into Dumfries. This meant the total loss of the two hundred and fifty or three hundred pounds he had put into the farm at the beginning, and also meant that he intended to support himself wholly by his excise duties. No move could have been more unfortunate. He not only surrendered for nothing what might at least have yielded him and his family enough food to maintain life, but he left the clean atmosphere of his upland farm for the many temptations of a busy Scotch town. Furthermore, he interested himself in the politics of the day, ranging himself on the liberal side and speaking freely in favor of the revolutionists in France. These acts brought upon him the censure of the Government and the prospect of the loss of his position in the excise, upon which the poor poet was forced to make his peace and keep his opinions to himself. Altogether his years at Dumfries were marked by bitter discouragements and by the acceleration of his moral and physical downfall.

His poetry diminished in quantity during these years. In 1792 he was invited by George Thompson to contribute to another collection of Scottish songs and melodies. It is characteristic of Burns that he responded enthusiastically, — "I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have," — but that he refused all pay: "to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright prostitution of soul." Burns remained true to his promise, giving song after song to the collection and indignantly repudiating any suggestion of reward. In all he contributed sixty songs to the collection, although only a fraction of his contribution appeared before his death. Some of these songs were selected from those he had previously contributed to Johnson's *Museum,* and some were songs written earlier. Among the finest contributions were the following: *Duncan Gray, Saw ye Bonie Lesley, Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled, Highland Mary, Is there for Honest Poverty, There was a Lass, Mary Morison.*

His dissipations and excesses had made him prematurely aged and weakened his naturally strong constitution. The end came in 1796. In January, after an evening of drunken revelry, Burns fell in the street and lay there asleep for some time. A rheumatic fever came from this accident, the effects of which he never was able to shake off. He could not keep up his excise duties during the lingering illness that followed and felt the stings of actual want. July 21 he died. A great public funeral was accorded him, the people high and low forgetting quickly his weaknesses and paying their reverence to his true greatness. He was buried in a corner of St. Michael's Churchyard, Dumfries.

As a song-writer Burns is without peer. The spontaneity of his inspiration, the depth and directness of his vision, the sincerity of his emotion, have given to his lyrics a freshness that never fades. In his poems we have no Cynthias, no Venuses, Adonises, or pretended shepherds, Phyllises and Corydons, but instead the clear, open world of nature and of man. His sympathies are both broad and intense, his humor is at times delicate and subtle and again broad and piercing, his range is from withering invective to tenderest pathos, his style is without affectation or artificiality. He is the great interpreter of Scottish life. From one aspect we have *The Cotter's Saturday Night,* from another the rollicking *Halloween,* from yet another the *Tam o' Shanter,* embodying something of the weird superstitious element in Scotch character; again the boisterous revels of *The Jolly Beggars,* and above all the martial *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled.* His poems have, indeed, become the poetry of a people. His wrecked life is forgotten in the glory of the inspiration that breathed into his verse the life and soul of Scotland.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Gray and Collins, but more especially Cowper and Burns, had during the eighteenth century given a hint of an awakening in poets to a new conception of life and of nature, but the full renascence came with the work of Wordsworth and, to a less extent, of Coleridge. The true beginnings of the Romantic movement in literature corresponded in time closely to the French Revolution in politics and had some characteristics in common with it. As the French Revolution issued in a new era, so did Wordsworth's poetry; as the French Revolution emphasized the rights of the individual, so did Wordsworth discover a new dignity in humble life; as the French Revolution had one of its roots in the return to nature preached by Rousseau, so Wordsworth sought the main springs of his inspiration in a new conception of nature and man's relations with it. A revolution in letters accompanied the revolution in politics, and of the revolution in letters the quiet, secluded Wordsworth was the prophet.

Wordsworth once dictated to his nephew, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, passages for an intended biography. "I was born," he said, "at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on April 7, 1770, the second son of John Wordsworth, attorney-at-law — as lawyers of this class were then called — and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale. My mother was Anne, only daughter of William Cookson, Mercer, of Penrith, and of Dorothy, born Crackanthorpe, of the ancient family of that name, who from the times of Edward the Third had lived in Newbiggen Hall, Westmoreland. My grandfather was the first of the name of Wordsworth who came into Westmoreland, when he purchased the small estate of Sockbridge. He was descended from a family who had been settled at Peniston, in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest. . . . The time of my infancy and early boyhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with my mother's parents at Penrith, where my mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold, in consequence of being put, at a friend's house in London, in what used to be called 'a best bedroom.' My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my fourteenth year. . . . Of my earliest days at school I have little to say, but that they were very happy ones, chiefly because I was left at liberty then, and in the vacations, to read whatever books I liked. . . . It may be, perhaps, as well to mention that the first verses which I wrote were a task imposed by my master — the subject, *The Summer Vacation;* and of my own account I added others upon *Return to School.* There was nothing remarkable in either poem."

Wordsworth's whole life was bound up intimately with the region in which he was born and passed his youth. As soon as he grew to manhood, he returned there and settled among the scenes that had impressed him as a child and that grew to be literally a part of his life. Acutely sensitive to the influences of natural beauty, and endowed with a spiritual insight which enabled him to interpret these to the world, Wordsworth found in the Lake region all the necessary inspiration for his greatest poems. He was born on the edge of the district, his earliest memories were of Derwent and Skiddaw, his school days at Hawkshead, on the banks of Esthwaite Water, led him to the opposite end of the district, his walks took him through every mile of ground, and in his manhood he settled on the banks of Grasmere Lake and later at Rydal Mount overlooking the little Rydal Lake. The scenery of his poems is the scenery of the Lakes and the surrounding hills and valleys, and the people are the people who lived there.

The life of no poet is more uneventful outwardly than was Wordsworth's. By the generosity of his uncles, to whose care he and his brothers and sisters had been entrusted at their father's death, he was sent to Cambridge in October, 1787, where he took his B.A. degree in January, 1791. His college career was not especially noteworthy. During his third vacation he took with a single friend a walking tour in Switzerland, coming into actual contact with the stir of the great Revolution in Europe. Perhaps something in what he saw there led him, after a short stay in London, to make another trip to France in November of 1791. He became actively enthusiastic over the revolutionary cause at this time and thought at one time of putting him-

self forward as a leader of the Girondist Party, but his family, wisely alarmed at the prospect, stopped his allowances and thus brought him back to England. A year later the war that ensued between France and England stirred him deeply, since he felt love and sympathy on the one hand for the French in their struggle and on the other for his native country in what he at first believed its misguided course. In 1795, when he was twenty-five years old, he was joined by his sister Dorothy and, with the proceeds of a small legacy left him by his friend Calvert, settled in a cottage at Racedown, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire. There began the quiet, introspective life which lasted for more than half a century. His sister was always with him, giving him wise and loving care and the companionship of perfect sympathy. October 4, 1802, he married Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith. With perfect tact she adapted herself to his life, careful and frugal, devoted to her husband, and never jealous of the sister who was so dear a companion. Henceforward, the even course of his life was little varied. He knew the joys and sorrows that are familiar to most men, the joys of friendship and of fatherhood, and the intense sorrows that come with the stroke of death in the family circle; he took a few trips in his own country and abroad; he changed his home until he acquired the ideal house at Rydal Mount. No interesting sensation can be extracted from a life like this.

If his life was outwardly uneventful, however, his inward development was the opposite. No poet has more freely disclosed to us his thoughts and the gradual unfolding of his mental life. The longest works he has left to us, and the works containing some of the noblest passages he ever wrote, are fragments of an epic he projected on his own education. To *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* the biographer must always refer for the true source of Wordsworth's power and greatness. There he tells us of his emotions as a boy, of his career at college, of his trip to Switzerland, of his feelings during the French Revolution and the subsequent war between France and England, of his life among the lakes and hills, of his philosophy.

Wordsworth's first poetical publication of importance was made jointly with Coleridge in the little volume entitled *Lyrical Ballads*. His story of how the volume grew out of an agreement with Coleridge to write a single poem to defray the expenses of a short walking trip is familiar. "In the course of this walk was planned the poem of *The Ancient Mariner*. . . . As we endeavored to proceed conjointly our respective manners proved so widely different, that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. The *Ancient Mariner* grew and grew, till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to think of a volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects, taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through our imaginative medium." The little volume appeared in the fall of 1798, including, of Wordsworth's best work, *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, and *Lines Written above Tintern Abbey*, the last-named being indeed a poetic confession of faith. The poems, and particularly the preface, in which the theory was boldly advanced that "The principal object proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men," attracted considerable attention to the authors at the time.

A convenient division of Wordsworth's poetical work has been suggested. From the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* until about 1814 he wrote in the full fervor of an apostle of a new faith. His best lyrics are of this period; as, *Ruth*, *Nutting*, *Lucy Gray*, *The Daffodils*, *To the Cuckoo*, *My Heart Leaps Up*, *To the Daisy*, *Ode to Duty*, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. Some of the best known of his narrative poems, also (as *Michael*, *Resolution and Independence*, *The Brothers*, *Margaret*), and the whole of *The Prelude*, belong to this early period. In 1814 he finished *The Excursion*, the attempt to incorporate in poetry his own psychical development and philosophy. The projected poem, *The Recluse*, of which in its final form *The Excursion* was to be a part, was never finished. After 1814 the quality of his poetry was on the whole poorer, though he continued to write diligently. A few lyrics stand out above the rest with a gleam of the old inspiration, *To a Skylark* (*Ethereal Minstrel!*), *Yarrow Revisited*, *The Trosachs*, but he

spent much time in poetry which to us to-day seems uninspired, as the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* of 1821 and 1822, and a translation of a part of the Æneid in 1829 and 1830.

Recognition and honor came in his latter years. Between 1830 and 1840 the circle of his readers broadened and the general appreciation of his merit grew. A notable manifestation of this was the honorary degree of D.C.L. conferred on him by the University of Oxford in 1839, on which occasion Keble, the professor of poetry in the institution, introduced him as "one who had shed a celestial light upon the affections, the occupations, and the piety of the poor," and the applause was greater than had ever been given before except upon the visits of the Duke of Wellington. In 1842 he was given an annuity of three hundred pounds from the Civil List for distinguished literary merit, Sir Robert Peel stating "The acceptance by you of this mark of favour from the Crown, considering the grounds on which it is proposed, will impose no restraint upon your perfect independence, and involves no obligation of a personal nature." In March, 1843, after the death of Southey, he was offered the Poet Laureateship and, after some hesitation, accepted.

His work, however, was done. After the death of his daughter, Dora, in 1847, he wrote nothing. His last days were calm and peaceful. A slight cold, caught on one of his walks, brought on pleurisy, from which he died at noon April 23, 1850. According to his wish, he was buried in Grasmere churchyard.

Wordsworth was ever confident, even in the days succeeding Jeffrey's famous "This will never do" criticism, that his work would ultimately win recognition. Henry Crabb Robinson notes a visit from the poet in 1812: "He spoke of his own poems with the just feeling of confidence which a sense of his own excellence gives him. . . . He is persuaded that if men are to become better and wiser, the poems will sooner or later make their way."

And the poems have made their way, fulfilling a prophecy of Southey in 1804 that Wordsworth "will rank among the very first poets." Wordsworth's fellow poet and devoted admirer, Coleridge, has so fully analyzed the characteristics of Wordsworth's work that an independent attempt is superfluous. I, therefore, quote from the *Biographia Literaria* passages summarizing the excellences of this poetry: —

"First, an austere purity of language both grammatically and logically; in short a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning. . . .

"The second characteristic excellence of Mr. Wordsworth's work is: a correspondent weight and sanity of the Thoughts and Sentiments, — won, not from books; but — from the poet's own meditative observation. They are *fresh* and have the dew upon them. His muse, at least when in her strength of wing, and when she hovers aloft in her proper element, —

> Makes audible a linked lay of truth,
> Of truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
> Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes!

"Even throughout his smaller poems there is scarcely one, which is not rendered valuable by some just and original reflection. . . .

"Third (and wherein he soars far above Daniel) the sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs: the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction, of which I need not here give specimens, having anticipated them in a preceding page. This beauty, and as eminently characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry, his rudest assailants have felt themselves compelled to acknowledge and admire.

"Fourth; the perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. Like a green field reflected in a calm and perfectly transparent lake, the image is distinguished from the reality only by its greater softness and lustre. Like the moisture of the polish on a pebble, genius neither distorts nor false-colours its objects; but on the contrary brings out many a vein and many a tint, which escape the eye of common observation, thus raising to the rank of gems what had been often kicked away by the hurrying foot of the traveller on the dusty high road of custom. . . .

"Fifth; a meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy indeed of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer or comate (*spectator, haud particeps*), but of a contemplator, from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind or weather, or toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine. The superscription and the image of the Creator still remain legible to *him* under the dark lines, with which guilt or calamity had cancelled or cross-barred it. Here the Man and the Poet lose and find themselves in each other, the one as glorified, the latter as substantiated. In this mild and philosophic pathos, Wordsworth appears to me without a compeer. Such as he *is:* so he *writes*. . . .

"Last, and preëminently, I challenge for this poet the gift of Imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of *fancy*, Wordsworth, to my feelings, is not always graceful, and sometimes recondite. The *likeness* is occasionally too strange, or demands too peculiar a point of view, or is such as appears the creature of predetermined research, rather than spontaneous presentation. Indeed his fancy seldom displays itself, as mere and unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own. To employ his own words, which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed to all thoughts and to all objects —

> "add the gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream."

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, October 21, 1772, the youngest of the thirteen children of the Reverend John Coleridge. His father, the vicar of the little parish, was a kindly but somewhat eccentric genius, steeped in Hebrew which he commended to his little flock as "the immediate language of the Holy Ghost," and, learned in the classics. His mother Anne Bowdon (John Coleridge's second wife), was a practical and industrious but uneducated woman, who seems to have had less influence than mothers usually exercise over their children. "Possessing none even of the most common accomplishments of her day," Mr. Gillman writes from information derived from Coleridge himself, "she had neither love nor sympathy for the display of them in others."

Coleridge was a precocious child: "At a very premature age," he says, "even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me." In his tenth year he was entered for school at Christ's Hospital. There he came under Dr. Bowyer's especial observation because he was known to have read Virgil for amusement, and was encouraged in his studies. He testifies to the master's genius and influence as follows: "At school [Christ's Hospital] I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time, a very severe master, the Reverend James Bowyer. He early moulded my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero, of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil, and again of Virgil to Ovid He habituated me to compare Lucretius (in such extracts as I then read), Terence, and above all the chaster poems of Catullus, not only with the Roman poets of the, so-called, silver and brazen ages; but with even those of the Augustan æra: and on grounds of plain sense and universal logic to see and assert the superiority of the former in the truth and nativeness both of their thoughts and diction. At the same time that we were studying the Greek tragic poets, he made us read Shakespeare and Milton as lessons: and they were the lessons too, which required most time and trouble to *bring up*, so as to escape his censure. I learned from him, that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and

I well remember that; availing himself of the synonyms to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it would not have answered the same purpose; and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text."

At the age of nineteen he entered Jesus College, Cambridge. Of his college career we know little. From the accounts of one of his schoolfellows we learn that his room was the "rendezvous of conversation-loving friends," and that his interest in current politics was active. One incident reveals the impulsive peculiarity of the boy. Depressed by some untoward event, he suddenly left Cambridge, went to London, and enlisted in the Fifteenth Light Dragoons under the *alias* of Silas Tomkyn Comberbache (S. T. C.). He was relieved from his predicament after a few months, was discharged, and returned to college. Coleridge never took his college degree. He conceived a tremendous enthusiasm for a Pantisocracy, an ideal democracy on the banks of the Susquehanna, in which coöperative commonwealth he and Southey and Lovell were to be the leading spirits. To complete arrangements for this he left college in 1794.

October 4, 1795, Coleridge, still committed to the idea of a Pantisocracy and apparently inspired by the thought that a wife would be a valuable aid in such an ideal commonwealth, was married to Sarah (or Sara) Fricker, a sister-in-law to Southey. Although in later years Coleridge, looking back through years of bitter sorrows, spoke of this marriage as having been in a manner forced upon him, there is plenty of evidence to prove a true and sincere affection between the two in the first years of their married life. He was probably plunged into the love passion at the moment as he was plunged successively into the Fifteenth Light Dragoons and the impracticable scheme of a Pantisocracy.

In April, 1797, appeared a thin volume containing fifty poems, *Poems on various subjects, by S. T. Coleridge, late of Jesus College, Cambridge.* These were poems that had been written at various times since 1789 and were now collected and published by his friend, Amos Cottle. These poems did not attract much attention, nor did they deserve attention: in a later edition Coleridge himself criticized them as being "charged with a profusion of double epithets and a general turgidness."

More important works were to come, however, and soon. Coleridge first met Wordsworth in the summer of 1795 and two years later (1797) he went to visit the poet at his cottage in Racedown. Then began that intimate poetic companionship that resulted in the *Lyrical Ballads* a year later, and gave the inspiration for the too short-lived flower of Coleridge's genius. Coleridge had discerned in Wordsworth's earliest published work signs of unusual power and was eager to be with him.

Wordsworth after Coleridge's visit moved from his Racedown cottage to Alfoxden in order to allow more intimate companionship. For a year the two were constantly together, thinking and talking of nothing but poetry: ". . . our conversation," writes Coleridge in his *Biographica Literaria*, "turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. . . . The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; . . . In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." From the inspiration of such companionship and "conversation" as this sprang *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (which actually appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* volume), and *Christabel*, as well as the *Ode to France*, *Fears in Solitude*, *Frost at Midnight*, *Love*, and the fragment, *Kubla Khan*. And when, shortly after, the imponderable thread of sympathetic companionship was severed, the poetic inspiration lapsed, and only the second part of *Christabel* (1800) and the sad stanzas *To Dejection* (1802) remain to show what might have been.

His stay at Stowey where he was so near Wordsworth was interrupted in January of 1798 by

a call from Shrewsbury for him to undertake there the duties of the Unitarian minister. For a month he did this, but his friends the Wedgwoods (sons of the famous potter), shocked at the idea of his giving up his poetry, offered him an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds on condition that he would devote himself entirely to poetry and philosophy. This offer he accepted; he returned to Stowey in February, and was with Wordsworth until they all together went to Germany at the end of the year.

In Germany, the Wordsworths lived at Goslar, but Coleridge, after five months of hard study at Ratzeburg, went on to Göttingen, again to study. He returned to England in the late summer of 1799. In his absence from Wordsworth, however, the spell that had inspired him was broken, never again in its full potency to be renewed. He was with Wordsworth again, — in September of 1799 he was exploring with Wordsworth the Lake country, — but the renewed association did not re-create the spell. He wrote more poetry, it is true, but none that approached The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the first part of *Christabel*. He translated *Wallenstein*, he contributed occasionally verses to the *Morning Post*, as *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, and *The Devil's Thoughts*, but his work as a poet was done.

We have to record now the sad, sad story of Coleridge's degeneration. In 1800 he left London and moved to Keswick in the Lake region. At some period within the next few years, just when it is impossible to say, he became addicted to the use of opium. He places the time for us himself as nearly as it can be placed: "I wrote a few stanzas three and twenty years ago, soon after my eyes had been opened to the nature of the habit into which I had been ignorantly deluded by the seeming magic effects of opium, in the sudden removal of a supposed rheumatic affection, attended with the swellings in my knees and palpitation of the heart and pains all over me, by which I had been bedridden for nearly six months . . . in one of these [medical] reviews I met a case which I fancied very like my own in which a cure had been effected by the Kendal Black Drop. In an evil hour I procured it: it worked miracles — the swellings disappeared, the pains vanished. I was all alive, and all around me being as ignorant as myself, nothing could exceed my triumph. . . . Alas! it is with a bitter smile, a laugh of gall and bitterness, that I recall this period of unsuspecting delusion, and how I first became aware of the maelstrom, the fatal whirlpool to which I was drawing, just when the current was beyond my strength to stem."

The results of the habit were inevitable: he became unsteady of purpose, shiftless, restless, unhappy, and ill; he alienated his wife, and lost his sense of responsibility for his family, so that the burden of their support was shifted to the patient and industrious Southey; he sank for weeks and months at a time out of sight of his friends; he became a mental and physical wreck. Cottle, who ran across him in 1814, writes in his *Recollections:* "In 1814 S. T. C. had been long, very long, in the habit of taking from two quarts of laudanum a week to a pint a day, and on one occasion he had been known to take in the twenty-four hours a whole quart of laudanum."

In 1816 Coleridge at last mustered up moral strength enough to put himself into the charge of a physician, a Dr. Adams. Through the physician's influence, he was installed in the family and care of Mr. Gillman, of Highgate. On the 15th of April he went to the Gillman house, and there he lived, watched and tenderly cared for by Mr. Gillman, for sixteen years. He gradually resumed in part his literary activity, not in verse, however, but in prose. The verse that he published in these years had been written during the golden time of his acquaintance with Wordsworth and before his taking of opium. His prose works appeared from time to time — *Lay Sermons, Sybilline Leaves, Biographia Literaria, The Aids to Reflection, Church and State.* More important was the influence of his personality and conversation during this period. The house in Highgate was frequented by the most notable of the younger men of the period and Coleridge became a kind of high priest of literary criticism. In a way his position corresponded to that of Dr. Johnson. H. N. Coleridge, his nephew, collected some specimens of his *Table Talk* remarkable for breadth of sympathy and knowledge of literature. After his death four volumes of *Literary Remains* were published. By his prose works Coleridge has become noted as the supreme critic of poetry in our English history.

Toward the end of his life most of his energies were devoted to metaphysics and theology.

Those questions in which his sole interest lay while he was a boy became of equal interest to him as he drew near his grave. His physical powers failed fast from 1831 on, but his mind seemed strong. On July 11, 1834, he wrote: "I am dying, but without expectation of a speedy release. Is it not strange that, very recently, by-gone images and scenes of early life have stolen into my mind like breezes blown from the spice-islands of Youth and Hope — those twin realities of the phantom world!" Two weeks later, July 25, 1834, he died, and was buried in the churchyard near the house of Mr. Gillman where he had so long lived.

## WALTER SCOTT

Walter Scott, the ninth of the twelve children of Walter Scott, was born in Edinburgh August 15, 1771. His father was an attorney, a strictly honest and honorable man, very methodical and industrious, albeit somewhat formal and over-conventional. His mother, the daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, a professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh, was a well-educated and tender-hearted woman, with a mind stored with memories of the past. Both father and mother were descended from prominent Scotch Border families, and Walter Scott throughout his whole life cherished fondly his love for the border chieftains and "lairds" of the bygone age, ever acknowledging and revering the living Duke of Buccleuch as the head of his own clan.

As a child Scott was not physically strong. When he was but a year and a half old he suffered from a fever that partly paralyzed his right leg and left him with a marked lameness through life. As a result of this weakness his education, although not neglected, was irregular. He never received the classical training that was considered essential at that time, but was left to indulge his own fancy in reading, in that way to excite his active imagination with the history and romance of the old Scottish clans and the border life. As the years passed, the health inherited from generations of border ancestors seems to have overcome his early weakness. He went regularly to school and later studied law in the courses at the University of Edinburgh. He was a natural leader in the frolics of his fellows, thus early winning friends by his engaging personality.

His father expected him to follow the law profession, and so at the age of sixteen took him into his office as an apprentice. He studied law hard for a number of years, striving, however, for one of the many lucrative appointments rather than for marked success at the bar. In 1799 he was appointed Sheriff-Deputy of Selkirkshire with a salary of three hundred pounds, and in 1806 he gained the reversion of the office of Clerk of Session, enjoying the emoluments of that office after 1812. His income from the two offices was, after 1812, sixteen hundred pounds a year.

During all of this period, however, he had combined with his study of the law a huge amount of study and research in literature, and especially in old Scottish legend and history. He learned the French and Italian languages that he might read the old romances and poetry of those tongues in the original; he collected Scottish Border ballads and enlisted all of his many friends in the search; he dug among the musty records in the libraries and acquired a rare skill in deciphering old manuscripts; he planned the publication of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which appeared in two volumes in 1802; and all the time he was casting about in his mind for a subject for a great original work.

The suggestion that gave him his subject for his first great poem came from the Countess of Dalkeith, wife of the heir-apparent to the dukedom of Buccleuch. She asked Scott to write a ballad about the legend of the hobgoblin Gilpin Horner. In the poet's vivid imagination, the story grew until he had a framework for a picture of Border life and customs such as he had long wished to paint. Hence issued *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805. Its simplicity and interest of theme, ease and energy of style gained for it a favorable hearing from the critics and a wide popularity.

During this year of 1805 Scott became a silent partner in the printing firm of James Ballan-

tyne and Company, and a few years later (1809) in the bookselling and publishing concern of John Ballantyne & Company. The connections thus formed were ultimately disastrous to him financially, and even from the beginning involved him in monumental literary labors which would not otherwise have been undertaken. Thus, between 1806 and 1812, to supply the firm, he published an eighteen-volume edition of Dryden, a nineteen-volume edition of Swift, the thirteen volumes of Somers's *Tracts* and the two volumes of *State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler*.

His poetical work during this period was undertaken as a relief from his more serious burdens. *Marmion*, begun at the end of 1806 and published early in 1808, was an immense success, establishing Scott at the head of the living English poets in the opinion of the world. In 1810 appeared *The Lady of the Lake*, followed the next year by *The Vision of Don Roderick*, and by *Rokeby* and *The Bridal of Triermain* in 1813, and *The Lord of the Isles* in 1815.

Scott was at the height of his poetical career at the time of the publication of *The Lady of the Lake*. The later poems were not nearly so popular, and Scott's fame was eclipsed by the rising glories of Byron. Scott's poetry is not deeply imaginative or suggestive, but it has the strength of a good story well told. The action moves with stirring energy from incident to incident, the scenes are romantic, the style is simple and clear, the characters are vivid and heroic, and the lines are infused with a fervid glow of national feeling.

Scott turned from his poetry at this time to novel-writing. In 1805 he had begun *Waverley*, but had laid it aside after the opening chapters had been finished. Coming across the uncompleted manuscript one day as he was rummaging about for some fishing-tackle, he resolved to finish the story. He did this in a month of 1814 and published it anonymously in July of that year. This novel met with enormous success and huge sales, and encouraged him to continue in the same line. *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Legend of Montrose*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, *Kenilworth*, *The Pirate*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, *St. Ronan's Well*, and *Redgauntlet* constituted the remarkable output of the next decade. Scott was drawing upon the vast antiquarian store he had laid up in his younger days.

Something should be said of his private life during these years of public literary fame. In 1797 he married Charlotte Charpentier, a young lady of French parentage, and (1798) settled in a little cottage at Lasswade, about six miles from Edinburgh. Six years later he moved to Selkirkshire, of which he had been appointed sheriff, and lived in Ashestiel on the river Tweed, where all of his best poetry was written. With his appointment as Clerk of the Session (1812) and his assured income of sixteen hundred pounds a year, he indulged his cherished ideal of buying a country estate and living the life of a typical Scotch laird. He therefore bought Abbotsford, the estate on the Tweed with which his name will always be connected. He gradually acquired huge tracts of land, having spent, it is estimated, nearly thirty thousand pounds for that purpose alone. On this estate he dispensed hospitality with the liberal hand that, he thought, became a Scotch laird. In 1820 he was created a baronet, Sir Walter Scott, by the new king.

In the mean while his business partnership in the Ballantyne companies was giving him cause for serious worry. He trusted his partners blindly and bolstered up the staggering firms with the truly enormous sums he derived from the copyright and sales of his writings. The concerns were on the point of bankruptcy in 1813 and 1814, and were only saved by the popularity of *Waverley* and the novels that followed, and by the help of Constable, the great but daring London publisher. In 1818 the Ballantyne companies' affairs were wound up and their surplus stock sold to Constable. Scott, never questioning the details of the transaction, apparently imagined that he was cleared of all embarrassment, but he was disillusioned when Constable began to be in financial difficulties toward the end of 1825. In 1826 the crash came. All of Scott's fortune was swept away. Of the £150,000 which he had earned by his writings, not a penny was left, and he had to leave his beloved estate at Abbotsford, auction off his belongings, sell his house at Edinburgh, and go into lodgings. His wife died a few months later, and the

aged man took up the burden of life alone. At fifty-five he assumed a debt of £117,000 and bravely struggled to discharge it by his work.

Nothing in literary history is more tragic and affecting than the story of the remaining years of Scott's life. With dogged heroism he took up his work on *Woodstock*, a novel which had been dropped in the stress of financial trouble. In less than three months he finished it and sold it (1826) for £8228. He finished in 1827 his nine-volume *Life of Napoleon* and sold it for £18,000. He published *Chronicles of Canongate* (1827), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), and part of his two-volume *History of Scotland* (1829–30), besides a number of articles for the periodicals. Between 1826 and 1828 he earned £40,000 for his creditors, and would, had his health been spared, have been able in a few more years to have discharged his indebtedness in full. His exertions brought the attacks on his health, however; in November, 1830, he had a slight attack of apoplexy, and in April of 1831 a distinct stroke of paralysis. His mind failed him slightly and he was persuaded by his friends, who saw the necessity for a rest, that he had fully cleared off his debts. In this belief he agreed to take a sea voyage. The Government put a war-vessel at his disposal, and the doomed man for almost a year cruised in the Mediterranean and visited places of interest. When he felt that his death was near, he insisted on returning to his beloved Abbotsford. He passed into a state of coma on the way back, not to be aroused until he drew near his estate. At Abbotsford he died September 21, 1832, and was buried at Dryburgh Abbey. It is a pleasure to record that in 1847 his debts were wholly discharged by the value of the copyrights he had left and the estate at Abbotsford was cleared.

During his own lifetime the fame of Scott's poetical work was eclipsed by the popularity of his later prose romances, but as the years that have passed have thrown his whole literary career into a better perspective, the interest in and enthusiasm for his poetry has revived. Man after man has come forward to acknowledge the influence of the stirring *Marmion* and the romantic *Lady of the Lake* upon his life. "*The Lady of the Lake* was my especial favorite," writes Hamerton, "and I have no doubt that my early enthusiasm for that delightful poem implanted in me a love for beautiful lakes with romantic islands in them which had practical consequences afterwards. Even to this day these feelings are as lively in me as ever, so that nothing in the world seems to me so completely delightful as a lake if one has a sailing-boat to wander over it."

Scott's poetry is bracing. His active pen carried him from incident to incident in a stirring rush, and his vivid imagination peopled his scenes with the heroic figures of a bygone age. We do not read his poems for their historical accuracy, for he has melted his facts in a crucible in which has been burned away all that was ugly and coarse. We move in an idealized atmosphere from which the undeniable savagery, brutality, licentiousness, and frankness of speech has been purged away. We read of Border life as we should wish it to have been rather than as we know it was, and under the spell of the poet we are willing to accept the ideal for the real. And, after all, has he not thus served well the cause of poetry? With instinctive truth of vision he has pierced to the elements of nobility, valor, and honor that existed in the crude Scottish communities of ancient times and from those elements has constructed an idealized might-have-been. He is in his poetry truly, as some have claimed, the Homer of Scotland.

## GEORGE GORDON BYRON

A MAN willing to expose his vices and unhappiness before a conventional world should have an unusually thick and insensitive skin, otherwise the inevitable discussion and criticism will cause him the most intense suffering. Byron, acutely sensitive by nature, spread his inmost life before the world, admitted his dissipations, his marital unhappiness, his faults of temper and disposition, and then, after recoiling at first with horror before the prudish and hypocritical censure of society, plunged again into dissipation in a futile attempt to forget. He never grew calloused, although his boasted vices were an attempt to seem so. He was at one moment a *poseur*, claiming crimes that he never committed for the joy of observing the effect upon the

world; he was at the next passionately and sincerely revealing his inmost suffering to the whole world, and declaiming against the injustice with which he was treated. He was a sensitive, impulsive, emotional child throughout his whole life, a person who to a lesser degree than most men learned the maxim inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi —

*γνῶθι σέαυτον*

George Gordon Byron was born January 22, 1788, in London. The Byron family was of Norman stock (the Buruns, recorded in the Domesday Book), and the Gordons, his mother's family, were descended from James I of Scotland. Byron's father, Captain John Byron, of the Horse Guards, was a practiced libertine. He first abducted the Marchioness of Carmarthen, whom he married after she had obtained her divorce, and soon after her death in 1784 married Catherine Gordon, supposed to be a great heiress. He squandered what fortune she had, deserted her, and, in 1791, died in France, leaving his wife and three-year-old boy to live on one hundred and fifty pounds a year. Catherine Gordon was a woman of shallow discernment, quick temper, inordinate vanity, and little sense. She alternately caressed and abused her son, at times falling into paroxysms of rage during which she pursued the child around the rooms trying to strike him with a poker. A more unpleasant picture of family life can scarcely be imagined than that which encircled Byron. He could conceive no respect for his father or affection for his mother. These influences, which during the most impressionable years of life moulded his character, must be held to excuse some of the faults that were only too notorious in later years.

His education was irregular. His natural sensitiveness was accentuated by a slight physical deformity, resembling club-foot, and his home surroundings made him rebellious and uncontrollable. At the age of ten he inherited from his great-uncle, the "wicked old lord," the Newstead estate and his title, and his nobility made him more intractable than ever. He was precocious in his affections, falling violently and apparently sincerely in love, first with Mary Duff in 1797, then with Margaret Parker (perhaps the "Thyrza" of his poems) in 1800, and again with Mary Anne Chaworth in 1803. After some desultory study under private masters and at Harrow, he went up, in 1805, to Trinity College, Cambridge. There his worst characteristics were displayed, his pride, conceit, ostentation, and above all his delight in shocking the conventional authorities by his unconventional conduct. He left the University in 1808 without taking a degree.

Even while he was at college he had taken his first initiation into poetry. During 1806 and 1807 he wrote, printed, and published a volume of poems, *Hours of Idleness*, which attracted indulgent attention from many of the reviews. The *Edinburgh Review*, however, criticized the poems harshly, so Byron took striking revenge in his famous satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, published March 1, 1809. Many of his charges were unjust and were so acknowledged later by Byron, but his satire attracted much notice and gained him a place in the literary world.

In April of 1808 he entered upon his inheritance with revels at Newstead; in March of 1809 he took his seat in the House of Lords, but, acutely sensitive as always, did not deem his reception sufficiently cordial; and early in July of the same year, with his devoted friend Hobhouse, he set out upon his continental travels.

He spent about two years abroad, mainly in the countries about the Mediterranean, especially Spain, Greece, Albania, Turkey, and Asia Minor. In later years many myths grew up around these travels, and Byron was reputed to be the hero of his own poetical romances. He returned to London in July of 1811, much embarrassed by debts, with a satire entitled *Hints from Horace*, a number of minor poems — as *To Florence*, '*The spell is broke, the charm is flown*,' *Maid of Athens* — and two cantos of *Childe Harold*. Murray, the publisher, accepted the last-named and issued it early in 1812.

Byron's remark, that he "awoke and found himself famous," expresses the result of this publication. The poem went through five editions in the year. Byron became the social favorite in London; the titled poet was courted everywhere. Susceptible women especially succumbed

to him, and his life was for a time a succession of more or less disgraceful intrigues. For a time he had an "affair" with Lady Caroline Lamb, wife of Lord Melbourne, from which he had the utmost difficulty in extricating himself. The flighty woman threw herself in his way at every opportunity and later involved him in her own disgrace. An intrigue with Lady Oxford followed, and another with Lady Frances Webster. He was a welcome guest at all the houses of the great — Holland House, Lady Melbourne's, — he was a member of a dozen fashionable clubs, he numbered among his friends Moore, Rogers, and Campbell.

He was acute enough to take advantage in a literary way of his popularity. During these years he wrote with feverish haste a number of his narrative poems — *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* in 1813, *The Corsair* and *Lara* the next year, *Parisina* and *The Siege of Corinth*, written then but not published until 1816. Scott's contemporary verse romances were completely eclipsed. Of *The Corsair*, fourteen thousand copies were sold in one day.

In January, 1815, Byron married Miss Anne Isabella Milbanke, an heiress, and entitled in her own right to a peerage. How much Byron was influenced by his love for her and how much by his desire for her fortune will always remain a mooted question. It is noteworthy, however, that in after years Byron never spoke of her save with respect and affection. A few days over a year after the marriage, and five weeks after the birth of a daughter, Augusta Ada, Lady Byron left London, went to her father's house, and shortly afterward instituted proceedings for a legal separation. The true reasons for this separation will never be known. The monstrous charges made by Lady Byron in her old age are unproven and unprovable. It is probable that sufficient reasons are to be found in the mutual incompatability between the erratic, emotional poet, and the conventional, perhaps somewhat prudish, wife.

The marriage and quick separation were the talk of London. Byron, from feelings of delicacy we should like to think, refused to shield himself by casting any blame upon his wife. His poems, *Fare Thee Well*, and *The Sketch*, purporting to represent his feelings at the time, were privately circulated and, in April, printed in a newspaper. Gradually public opinion turned against him. By the time the separation papers were signed, April 18, Byron was socially ostracized, and a week later he left England for the Continent with apparently the bitterest of feelings at the injustice with which he had been treated. In the short space of four years he had turned the full circle, from obscurity to renown, and from renown back to ostracism.

Byron's best poetical work lay before him. He traveled by way of the Rhine to Geneva where he joined the Shelleys and, during his intimacy with them, wrote some of his finest poetry. The third canto of *Childe Harold*, *Prometheus*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, two acts of *Manfred*, the *Stanzas to Augusta* (his beloved half-sister), and the *Epistle to Augusta*, were all composed there. It is a curious example of the volatile nature of the man that, fresh from his London disgrace, he contracted an intimacy with Jane Clairmont from which in December was born a natural daughter, Allegra.

Late in 1816 he left the Shelleys and went over the Alps to Italy, accompanied at first by his friend Hobhouse. He finally settled in Venice and there plunged into the lowest and most degrading dissipations. He seems to have taken a degenerate joy in writing accounts of these revels and intrigues to London, knowing, perhaps, that, spread along the electric wires of social gossip, they would scandalize London. He was to some extent redeemed from his miscellaneous debauchery by his liaison, beginning about 1819, with the young, beautiful, and accomplished Countess Guiccioli, who as his mistress for the next four years gave him all the love and care that could have been given by a devoted wife. From the end of 1819, indeed, the relations between Byron and the Countess were established on a recognized Italian basis, Byron being her *cavalier servente*. Even through these years of intrigue and dissipation, however, his splendid mind was busy, and his literary production great. He finished *Manfred*, wrote the *Lament of Tasso*, *Beppo* (1818), *Mazeppa* and two cantos of *Don Juan* (1819), three cantos of *Don Juan*, *Marino Falieri*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Cain* in 1821, *The Vision of Judgment* and *Werner* in 1822, the lyrical drama *Heaven and Earth*, *Morgante Maggiore*, and *The Island* in 1823, and *The Deformed Transformed* in 1824.

During his stay in Italy he had interested himself in the struggle of the Italians for freedom from the Austrian rule, had indeed mixed with the Carbonari and been made a chief of their fighting troops, and as a result had fallen under the suspicion of the Austrian police. In 1823 the brave struggle of the Greeks in the Morea for independence from Turkey attracted him and he gave money unstintedly to their cause. Early in 1824 he went to Greece and identified himself with the revolutionists, being received with honor by Mavrocordatos, the Greek chieftain, and made a commander-in-chief of a guard of Suliote troops.

This last exploit of Byron's life has done much to rehabilitate his character in the eyes of the world. However much he may have dreamed of spectacular glory, it is certain that during his few months in Greece he actually suffered much for the cause, and was of service in reconciling opposing factions. His actual life there was brief. He had hoped to lead troops in battle, but was not destined to do so. On April 11 he was seized with fever and on the 19th he died, amid the lamentations of all Greece. His body was carried to England, and, the Dean of Westminster refusing burial in the Abbey, was buried in the family vault of Hucknall-Torkard Church, near Newstead.

Byron was an unusually handsome and striking figure. Trelawny thus describes him: "He was . . . of middle height, five feet eight and a half inches ; regular features, without a stain or furrow on his pallid skin, his shoulders broad, chest open, body and limbs finely proportioned. His small, highly finished head and curly hair had an airy and graceful appearance from the massiveness and length of his throat: you saw his genius in his eyes and lips. In short, nature could do little more than she had done for him, both in outward form and in the inward spirit she had given to animate it." And joined with these graces of person was a rare gift of personal magnetism. His sprightliness in conversation, his keen wit, his intuitional insight endeared him to those who came into intimate contact with him. His faults were notorious, in his lifetime, but time has done much to erase these from his memory. After his death his many notable charities, his high chivalry toward his wife during the trying period following her desertion of him when a word from him might have turned London society in his favor, his sincere devotion to the principle of freedom witnessed by his willingness to lay down his life for it, all combined to raise his fame in his own land and abroad. His life is a mass of irreconcilable contradictions: we cannot attempt to explain it, but we can, from this distance, forgive much that the conventional world of his own time could not forgive.

During the century that has followed his death many have attempted seriously to deny the reality of his poetic inspiration, but the verdict of posterity is being cast in his favor. Goethe once summed up Byron as follows: "Lord Byron is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman, and as a great talent. His good qualities belong chiefly to the man, his bad to the Englishman and the peer, his talent is incommensurable." Matthew Arnold, keenest of our English critics, wrote that "these two, Wordsworth and Byron, stand, it seems to me, first and preëminent in actual performance, a glorious pair, among the English poets of this century."

The first characteristic of his poetry is its energy. None can read Byron to the end without standing amazed before the impelling sweep of his thought, the facility and force of his expression, and the vitality that breathes through his lines. Granted that he was many times a *poseur*, granted that his egotism, vanity, and misanthropy intrude themselves often in his poems; yet we must acknowledge an intellectual grasp and vision, a sincerity in his hatred of hypocrisy and cant, an imaginative conception granted to but few poets in the history of the world. He spread before us his inmost thoughts and emotions with an intimacy which not even Mrs. Browning has surpassed, and we who read to-day are willing to recognize, through the contradictions, faults, and vanities, the innate genius of the man.

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Of poets of revolt, of the "Satanic school" as Southey said, none was more delicate, ethereal, and divinely inspired than Shelley. Because of his fiery independence of spirit he revolted against the bonds of custom and convention and gained for himself among his contemporaries an undeserved reputation for gross immorality, but with the passage of a century, the innate purity of his life and motives has been recognized. Historical perspective has thrown into their proper relations many of the incidents once magnified beyond all reason.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born August 4, 1792, at an old-fashioned country house called Field Place, near Horsham, in Sussex. His father, Timothy Shelley, was the son and heir of Sir Bysshe Shelley, Bart, and was Member of Parliament for the constituency of Shoreham. His mother, Elizabeth Pilfold, was of a good Surrey family, and was herself beautiful and capable, but not notably literary.

As a child Shelley was sensitive, impetuous, and highly imaginative. His brothers and sisters, all younger than he, have recorded for us incidents peculiarly valuable in revealing his imaginative and romantic nature, as his description of the nearby wood inhabited by a dragon and a headless specter, of the huge turtle in the pond, of the wise old snake in the garden, of the alchemist in the garret. After primary education at schools in the neighborhood, he went to Eton at twelve, where he gained the sobriquets of "Mad Shelley" and "Shelley the atheist," and was not popular either with masters or with his schoolmates. He left Eton at eighteen and entered University College, Oxford.

Shelley had already shown his decided bent toward literature. In his childhood he had scribbled verses with ease, and while he was still in Eton he published two wild prose romances, *Zastrossi* and *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian*, reflections of the Mrs. Radcliffe school. At the time of his matriculation at Oxford he had poems in the hands of publishers. He showed thus early the impetuous hurry which characterized him through life, the tendency to ignore solid facts and logic in the sweep of his impulses and his imagination, to rush into print with his immature work and half-formed theories.

Shelley's stay at the University was very brief. With a friend, Hogg, as his confidant, he printed anonymously a little pamphlet, *The Neccssity of Atheism*, an argument that neither reason nor testimony adequately establishes the existence of a deity, and sent it broadcast to invite discussion. The authorities at the College traced the authorship to him, and expelled him and his friend March 25, 1811.

Shelley went to London. He found himself in desperate straits. His father, scandalized at his action, demanded that he return home, study, apologize to the Oxford authorities, and profess conformity to the Church. His allowances were cut off and he lived for a time on contributions from his sisters, secretly conveyed to him by a mutual friend, Miss Harriet Westbrook. Shelley refused to recant, and not until six weeks later was a reconciliation effected on the basis that Shelley should receive two hundred pounds a year and complete independence of action and thought. The acquiescence of the rather stubborn conventional father to these terms was due to the fact that Shelley was in direct line for the baronetcy, and was, therefore, a person of considerable importance.

Shelley's impetuous nature was shortly to involve him in more serious difficulties. The pretty intermediary during his six weeks in London, Harriet Westbrook, had fallen entirely under Shelley's proselyting influence, professed atheism, and rebelled against a return to school. She threw herself upon Shelley's protection, and he, really inspired by the purest and highest motives, eloped with her and married her in Edinburgh August 28, 1811. His conduct was highly honorable from every point of view, but the two were singularly ill-mated. His wife was beautiful, sweet-tempered, and well-bred, albeit she was the daughter of an innkeeper, but was wholly unable to "feel poetry and understand philosophy." These failings, not serious in the wife of an ordinary man, were fatal for the happiness of Shelley.

The marriage bond held Shelley for about three years, but the continual bickering that arose between his wife and him proved intolerable at last. It must be remembered, in order to understand rightly the succeeding events, that Shelley's pronounced principles were wholly out of accord with the rules of society and the laws of his country. Marriage was to him merely a convention, not to be held sacred or inviolable. When he met a woman who could more intimately enter into a spiritual communion with him than could his wife, he held that, except for arbitrary conventions of society, he was free to accept such communion. In his mind he was violating no sacred law. Such a woman he met in Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. She was imbued as he was with atheistic principles and contempt for social convention. July 28, 1814, Shelley and she and Jane Clairmont, a half-sister, left the Godwin house, crossed to Calais, and went to Switzerland, all three prepared to ignore social conventions and accept the consequences. In January of 1815, upon the death of Sir Bysshe Shelley, the poet, as the prospective heir to his father, came immediately into possession of a good income.

In November of 1816, Harriet Shelley drowned herself in the Serpentine. Shelley had remained on good terms with her and had given her a liberal allowance for her needs, but she herself had formed a connection with some other man and had also become intemperate. Disappointment, disgrace, remorse, some ill-treatment at home, and an hereditary predisposition toward suicide combined to drive her to this fatal step. Shelley, though deeply shocked and grieved, never held himself in any way responsible. In December of 1816, all obstacles to the legal union of Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin being removed by Harriet's death, the marriage was performed.

Shelley now settled in Buckinghamshire and undertook to recover his children from the Westbrooks, but his right to do so was contested in the Chancery Court on the ground that Shelley had deserted his wife and would educate his children in his own atheistic and anti-social opinions. Judgment was given against Shelley, and the children were put under the guardianship of Dr. Hume, an orthodox army surgeon nominated by Shelley, the poet contributing liberally to their support.

In March, 1818, Shelley, frightened by what he believed to be serious lung trouble, moved his whole household to Italy, where he spent the remainder of his life. He migrated from place to place, — Milan, Leghorn, Venice, Rome, Naples, Florence, Pisa, — and in 1822 was living on the Casa Magni on the Gulf of Spezia. Much of the time there Shelley spent sailing in the little skiff, Don Juan, with his friend Williams. Early in July they set out across the gulf to meet Leigh Hunt at Leghorn. On the 8th they left Leghorn for the return trip. Days passed and nothing was heard of them. Trelawney, who had watched them sail out of Leghorn Harbor, rode in person along the shore toward Via Reggio searching for evidences of a wreck. At that place he found a water-keg and some bottles which had been in the boat. On the 18th, Shelley's body was cast up on the sand, "with the volume of Æschylus in one pocket, and Keats's poems in the other, doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away." On the 6th of August, the body was taken from the sand which had covered it and cremated on the spot in compliance with the requirements of the law. "The heat from the sun and fire was so intense that the atmosphere was tremulous and wavy," writes Trelawney; "the fire was so fierce as to produce a white heat on the iron, and to reduce its contents to gray ashes. The only portions that were not consumed were some fragments of bones, the jaw and skull; but what surprised us all was that the heart remained entire. In snatching this relic from the fiery furnace, my hand was severely burnt." His ashes were carried to Rome and buried there in the little Protestant cemetery with the following inscription: —

"Percy Bysshe Shelley, Cor Cordium, Natus iv. Aug. M.CCXII. Obiit viii Jul. MDCCCXXII.

"Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

During his short and very eventful life as outlined above, Shelley had established himself as the greatest lyric poet who has written in English. *Queen Mab* was published when he was

twenty-one, *Alastor* in 1816, *The Revolt of Islam* in 1817, but all of Shelley's finest work was done during the four short years in Italy from 1818 to 1822. His genius had passed through its apprenticeship and matured rapidly. Of his longer poems, *Rosalind and Helen* was finished at Lucca in August, 1818; *Julian and Maddolo* (a reflection of the companionship with Byron), the lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound*, perhaps his masterpiece, and his terrible tragedy, *The Cenci*, in 1819; *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*, in 1821. Of the lyrics, practically all that we have retained as most characteristic of his genius were written during this period. *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills* was composed at Este in October of 1818; *The Ode to the West Wind* and *The Indian Serenade*, in 1819; *The Cloud*, and "*I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden*," in 1820; *To Night*, "*Music, when soft voices die*," "*One word is too often profaned*," "*O world! O life! O time!*" in 1821; and "*When the lamp is shattered*" and *A Dirge*, in 1822.

Shelley will always be to the discerning lover of poetry a shining example of success in failure, of an Arthur struggling for an ideal, failing, and yet supremely great in his failure. For Shelley sought to fix the delicate, intangible fancies that flit almost imperceptibly before our imaginations. Words are too crude a medium for this purpose: only music can approach success. Shelley was foredoomed to failure in his attempt. "Mr. Shelley's style," wrote William Hazlitt in his criticism of the *Posthumous Poems*, "is to poetry what astrology is to natural science — a passionate dream, a straining after impossibilities, a record of fond conjectures, a confused embodying of vague abstractions, — a fever of the soul, thirsting and craving after what it cannot have, indulging its love of power and novelty at the expense of truth and nature, associating ideas by contraries, and wasting great powers by their application to unattainable objects." And yet, with due respect for Hazlitt's opinion, to the minds of many of us Shelley's great powers were not "wasted." His poetry strikes within us a chord which none but the greatest sound. We, too, have had our ideals, our impalpable

> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;—

our visions too filmy to be expressed in rough words, yet none the less real and precious. To us his poetry seems to have been the direct breath of a soul; as Macaulay says, "not to have been an art, but an inspiration."

## JOHN KEATS

When genius has flowered in a man of letters, it is always customary to look back to parents or environment for the seeds and cultivation. In one man's father we note unusual force of character, marked piety, or the like; in another's mother we hear of a vivid imagination and a mind stored with old wives' tales; and to said fathers or mothers we may trace respectively the deep and scathing satire of one poet or the romantic fancies of another. No biographer has succeeded, however, in identifying in the parentage and early environment of Keats the germs of the love of beauty and delicacy of touch that distinguished him in an era of great poets.

John Keats was born October 29 (or October 31), 1795. His father, Thomas Keats, had come as a boy to London and worked his way up to the place of head hostler in the Swan and Hoop livery-stable, kept by a Mr. John Jennings. The head hostler married Frances Jennings, daughter of his employer, and, upon the retirement of his father-in-law immediately after, took over the business. The newly married couple lived at the stable, and it was in their rooms there that John, their first child, was born.

In 1804, Thomas Keats was killed by a fall from a horse and less than a year later the widow married William Rawlings, apparently the successor to her husband in the ownership of the livery-stable. In 1806, she left her husband and, with her children, went to live with her mother, Mrs. Jennings, at Edmonton. The stepfather, Rawlings, seems to have passed out of the knowledge and lives of the children after this time.

The family was by no means left in poverty after the death of the father. Mr. Jennings had,

upon his death in 1805, left thirteen thousand pounds from which provision was made for his wife and daughter. There was enough to permit the children to have a good education with the possibility of preparation for a profession. John and his two brothers were sent to a little private school at Enfield kept by John Clarke, where John formed a friendship with Charles Cowden Clarke, the head master's son. Keats was a bright, active, vivacious student, very pugnacious on occasions, and a natural leader among his schoolmates. During his last years at school, 1809 and 1810, all the energy of his nature seems to have turned by some inward impulse toward reading. He was at his books from morning to night, giving up the athletics of which he had been so fond and delighting in literature.

His mother died in 1810 and his guardians, desiring to train him for a profession, removed him from school in the same year and apprenticed him to Thomas Hammond, a surgeon at Edmonton. We know little of the years of this apprenticeship, except that, being near his old school, he often walked over to see Cowden Clarke and exchanged books with him, reading especially during these days Spenser and the Elizabethans. Charles Brown, intimate friend during the closing years of Keats's short life, is authority for the statement that Keats owed his own inspiration to write verse wholly to his soul-awakening upon reading Spenser. "In Spenser's fairyland," says Brown, "he was enchanted, breathed in a new world, and became another being; till, enamoured of the stanza, he attempted to imitate it, and succeeded. . . . This, his earliest attempt, the *Imitation of Spenser*, is in his first volume of poems."

In 1814, after a quarrel, the indentures of apprenticeship were canceled by mutual consent and Keats went to London to continue the study of his profession in Guy's and St. Thomas's hospitals, but his chief interest had already come to be poetry. Clarke had settled in London and Keats's intimate friendship with him was renewed. It was after a night's enthusiastic study of Chapman's Homer that Keats sent his friend the famous sonnet, "*Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold.*" On another occasion early in 1816, Clarke showed some of Keats's manuscript poems to Leigh Hunt and brought the poet and Hunt together. Through Hunt Keats became acquainted with Shelley, Reynolds (a young man of promise who became one of his close friends and admirers), and the painter Haydon, whose fiery ardor struck an answering enthusiasm from the poet. Keats's friendships and the encouragement he received from those to whom his poetry was shown drew him further and further from his hospital work, so that in the winter of 1816 and 1817 he definitely abandoned his profession. In March, 1817, the *Poems by John Keats* were published, with a dedicatory sonnet to Leigh Hunt.

Despite occasional purple patches, the poems of 1817 deserved the neglect with which they were received, — a cordial but just appreciation in Hunt's *Examiner*, the enthusiasm of a few friends, a fair sale for a fortnight, and then oblivion. Apparently George Keats, the poet's brother, was inclined to blame the publisher for the chilly reception accorded to the little volume. We have the letter written by the publishers, C. and J. Ollier, to George Keats: —

"*Sir*, — We regret that your brother ever requested us to publish this book, or that our opinion of its talent should have led us to acquiesce in undertaking it. We are, however, much obliged to you for relieving us from the unpleasant necessity of declining any further connexion with it, which we must have done, as we think the curiosity is satisfied, and the sale has dropped. By far the greater number of persons who have purchased it from us have found fault with it in such plain terms, that we have in many cases offered to take the book back rather than be annoyed with the ridicule which has, time after time, been showered upon it. In fact, it was only on Saturday last that we were under the mortification of having our own opinion of its merits flatly contradicted by a gentleman, who told us he considered it 'no better than a take in.' These are unpleasant imputations for any one in business to labour under, but we should have borne them and concealed their existence from you had not the style of your note shewn us that such delicacy would be quite thrown away. We shall take means without delay for ascertaining the number of copies on hand, and you shall be informed accordingly."

Keats himself, before the full knowledge of the success or failure of his poems could be realized, went for rest and study to the Isle of Wight, from which he wrote to his friend Reynolds:

"I find I cannot do without poetry — without eternal poetry; half the day will not do it — the whole of it. I began with a little, but habit had made me a leviathan. . . . I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*, which I hope I shall have got some way with before you come, when we will read our verses in a delightful place I have set my heart upon, near the Castle."

*Endymion: a Poetic Romance*, was published in the spring of 1818. Its imperfections Keats himself discerned, — "I would write the subject thoroughly again but I am tired of it, and think the time would be better spent in writing a new romance," — and in his preface he acknowledges to the public his dissatisfaction with the results of his work, but his humility did not save him from the savage onslaughts of the reviewers. The poet was known to be a friend of Hunt, so that the *Quarterly* ranged him as a "puling satellite of the arch-offender and King of Cockaigne, Hunt," and advised his return "to plasters, pills, and ointment-boxes." The poem has lived to confute these bitter criticisms. Faulty as it is in many ways, it has survived by virtue of the law set forth in its opening verse —

A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

Keats was too much occupied just at this time to feel the full sting of the *Quarterly's* attack, for his brother George was setting out for America to try his fortune and his brother Tom was sickening with the same disease which later carried off the poet himself. He tenderly cared for his sick brother during the last months of the illness and after the death early in December, he went to live and share expenses with his friend Brown at Hampstead. At Brown's house he again became absorbed in his poetry, working at this time upon *Hyperion*.

During this same period the one great love-influence came into Keats's life. He became completely fascinated with Fanny Brawne, the daughter of a widow in the neighborhood. By his friends his choice was considered unfortunate, for the independent, self-confident girl of seventeen was wholly unfitted to be a fit mate for the delicate, sensitive poet. His experience was certainly an unhappy one. The condition of his finances was such that marriage could be considered only a remote possibility, and a little later the unmistakable signs in him of the consumption that had carried off his brother removed even this possibility. He was mentally tortured between his love for Miss Brawne, his anguish at the realization that marriage was impossible, and intense jealousy at the thought of any one else aspiring to her. He was alternately raised high in hope and cast into the deepest dejection.

And yet, unhappy and disturbed as he was at this time, he did his best work between the summer of 1818 and the spring of 1820. The poems of this period were published in July of the latter year, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems*, including the *Ode: Bards of Passion and of Mirth, Ode on a Grecian Urn, La Belle Dame sans Merci, Ode to Psyche, Ode to a Nightingale, Lamia*, and *To Autumn*. On February 3, 1820, his grave condition, suspected for a year previous, became evident to him when he saw a drop of blood from his mouth: "It is arterial blood — I cannot be deceived in that color . . ." he said to his friend Brown; "I must die."

He was warned that he could not survive another winter in England, so, very reluctantly, he set out, September 18, for Naples, accompanied by an artist friend, Joseph Severn. The two friends went to Rome and settled in the Piazza di Spagna. There, on the 23d of February, Keats died. Four days later he was buried in the Protestant cemetery near the pyramid of Caius Sestius.

In thinking of Keats's poetry, we return to what he wrote his friend Reynolds: "I find I cannot do without poetry — without eternal poetry; half the day will not do it — the whole of it." No poet was more fully absorbed in poetry than Keats. To him it was a passion, it was life itself. His was a mind peculiarly susceptible to beauty, beauty in the external world, beauty of thought and imagination, and beauty of language. As he was fed upon the Elizabethans in his youth and his young manhood, so his poetry, with its richness of imagination and its beauty of expression, takes us back to Spenser and Shakespeare. To Matthew Arnold, Keats is "the poet, who evidently caught from Spenser his sweet and easy-slipping movement, and who has

exquisitely employed it; a Spenserian genius, nay, a genius by natural endowment, richer probably than even Spenser; . . . an Elizabethan born too late." His life was short, his quantity of poetry was very small, but the quality of his poetry, of his best poetry, is of the highest order. "He would have been among the very greatest of us if he had lived," said Tennyson; "there is something of the innermost soul of poetry in almost everything he ever wrote."

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

Matthew Arnold, oldest son and second child of Thomas Arnold, the famous head master of Rugby, was born at Laleham, near Staines, December 24, 1822. Dr. Thomas Arnold, himself a writer, was one of the noblest and most accomplished characters of his age, endowed with an earnestness and sincerity that made him all through his life a great force for good. Mary Penrose, Matthew Arnold's mother, the youngest daughter of the Reverend John Penrose, rector of Fledborough in Nottinghamshire, was a woman of striking beauty and unusual dignity of appearance, as well as of fine education and natural ability. Until her death Matthew kept up with her an affectionate and sympathetic correspondence. At the time of Matthew Arnold's birth his father was three years out of Oxford tutoring pupils for the University. Thomas Arnold was not appointed head master of Rugby until 1828.

If ever a man were in danger of being spoiled by overmuch education, Matthew Arnold was that man. Brought up in strictly conventional albeit high-minded environment, at school in Laleham from eight until he was fourteen, at Winchester two years, at Rugby four (1837–41), winning a scholarship at Oxford in 1840 and matriculating at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1841, Arnold ran the risk of having all of his native genius snuffed out by the powerful influences of the formal academic training. Advantageous as such training undoubtedly is in most respects, it cannot be doubted that strict academic bonds tend in many cases to cramp original impulses during a youth's most impressionable years. What Arnold might have been under different circumstances it would be rash to conjecture: we can marvel that he rose to such heights as he did.

Of his college days we know little. He had written verses even before he went to Oxford, having won a Rugby prize with a poem entitled *Alaric at Rome*, and at Oxford he won the Newdigate prize by a poem entitled *Cromwell*. Neither poem is noteworthy. Among his friends at college were John, Duke Coleridge, later Lord Chief Justice, and J. C. Shairp, later Principal of United College, St. Andrew's. His quick intellect and (on the testimony of his brother) his fashionable dressing made him popular among a certain set: "His Olympian manners," writes Max Müller, "began even at Oxford; there was no harm in them, they were natural, not put on. The very sound of his voice and the wave of his arm were Jove-like." In the final examination for classical honors Arnold was in the second class, but in the next spring (1845) he was elected to a fellowship at Oriel.

Upon leaving Oxford — he did not relish the life of a don — he taught for a short time at Rugby, then in 1847 became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and in 1851 received from Lord Lansdowne an appointment as Inspector of Schools. He retained this inspectorship thirty-five years, conscientiously performing the duties of the position until his resignation in 1886. In June of 1851, a few months after his appointment, he married Frances Lucy Wightman, daughter of an excellent and highly respected judge of the queen's bench, afterwards Sir William Wightman.

In the mean while Arnold had published over the initial "A." a little volume of poems, *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* (1849). As with so many first volumes, it received no attention and was withdrawn from circulation after a few copies had been sold. The poetry-reading public, usually few in numbers, were engrossed in the rising fame of Tennyson and Browning or looked back to the best work of the still-living Wordsworth and Rogers. The poems themselves in this little volume, including *The Strayed Reveller, Mycerinus The Sick King in Bokhara,*

*The Forsaken Merman*, and *Resignation*, deserved recognition: in later years all but one were reprinted and they are part of the standard editions of Arnold to-day.

Three years later (1852) when he was a man of thirty, Arnold's second volume of verse was published, *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*, by "A." The reception of this volume was as unsatisfactory as that of the first, although it contained besides the *Empedocles*, *Tristam and Iseult*, *A Summer Night*, *On the Rhine*, *Absence*, *The Buried Life*, *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann*, and *Lines Written in Kensington Gardens*. Before fifty copies had been sold, this volume was, like the first, withdrawn.

Arnold had, however, found himself as a poet, and the next year (1853) he published a new volume, containing a republication of many poems of previous volumes, adding a number of new pieces, and subscribing for the first time his own name on the title-page — "Poems by Matthew Arnold, a new edition." Among the new pieces which first appeared in this 1853 volume were *Sohrab and Rustum*, *Requiescat*, and *The Scholar Gipsy*. In 1855 was published *Poems by Matthew Arnold*, second series, containing only two new poems, *Balder Dead*, and *Separation*.

With the publication of the 1853 volume and its successor in 1855, Arnold's reputation became established. The excellent critical preface to the former volume had attracted attention, too, by its clear enunciation of sound principles of his art. The practical recognition of his position came in the form of his election in 1857 to the professorship of poetry at Oxford.

Arnold held this professorship for a decade, but during that time did not identify himself especially with the University life. He did not care for the title "Professor" and did not reside at Oxford: he delivered a few lectures, enjoyed the remuneration (less than one hundred pounds a year), and published a little additional poetry. In 1858, when he entered upon the position, he published his tragedy, *Merope*, but the cold, frigid, reflective style made this a failure. The lyric inspiration came to him more and more seldom as the years went by. In November of 1857, he wrote *Rugby Chapel;* in 1859, *A Southern Night;* in 1861, *Thyrsis* (on the death of his friend Clough); and in 1881, *Westminster Abbey* (on the death of Dean Stanley).

With the decrease of inspirational poetry, however, came a notable flow of reflective criticism. The publication of certain of the lectures delivered at Oxford insured him a high place as a brilliant and subtle critic. *On Translating Homer* appeared first in 1861, and *On the Study of Celtic Literature* in 1867.

His official duties as Inspector of Schools continued through these years. Although the routine of the work at times wearied him, he devoted much of his best energies to the work. He welcomed his assignments to study the educational systems of continental countries and his reports *Popular Education of France, with Notices of that of Holland and Switzerland* (1861), *On Secondary Education in Foreign Countries* (1866) show how thoroughly he exerted himself in his duties. His fame as poet and critic lead us now to forget the thirty-five years of steady routine toil in the educational work of the kingdom.

Arnold's work in reflective criticism continued during these years. His powers were well shown in the series, *Essays in Criticism*, published in 1865 and in *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869. Here he attacked the stolid English "philistine" indifference to ideas in the realms of literature, politics, and religion. Between 1870 and 1877 he produced a number of essays on religion — *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), *God and the Bible* (1875), and *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877). His interest in poetry continued, though he wrote little himself, and he edited some of Johnson's "Lives," *Selections from Wordsworth* (1879), *Selections from Byron* (1881), and wrote the general introduction to Ward's selections from *The English Poets*. In 1883 his literary eminence was rewarded by a pension of two hundred and fifty pounds a year from the Civil List, upon the receipt of which he retired from his inspectorship.

Of Arnold's private life we know very little. He discouraged all efforts to gain biographical material. His married life was continuously happy, and his affection for his family peculiarly tender and sweet. The satire with which he attacked the lethargic philistine of his own times exposed him to charges of snobbery and priggishness, but his friends have recorded touchingly their evidence to his purity and gentleness of character. "I believe that a more blameless, nay,

a more admirable, man in every relation never lived. He was one of the noblest and most perfect characters I have ever known, and I have known him sixty years," wrote Lord Coleridge. "Certain it is that Mr. Arnold's superiority of mien gave offense in some directions, appearing to be regarded as a kind of involuntary criticism. In addition to this, his lofty mental attitude and gravity of demeanor were by some felt to be oppressive, and were misconstrued as pride. Yet proud, in a narrow and selfish sense, Arnold was not. His nature, full of dignity, was yet gentle and singularly sweet, and his interest in the masses was sympathetic and sincere," wrote Florence Earl Coates.

Arnold's end came suddenly and with no warning. His general health had always been good, though his physicians had warned him of hereditary weakness of the heart. April 15, 1888, he was at Liverpool with his wife, planning to meet his daughter as she landed from the steamer. He ran to catch a car, the exertion brought on heart failure, and he died at once.

Arnold never gave in his poetry the impression of being divinely inspired to write. In all his poetical work we can find nothing hastily thrown off in the heat of emotion. He was not endowed with that fine frenzy of which we hear so much. And yet, the quiet, calm, restrained poetry appeals to us. The dignity of the man, the highly cultivated soul of him, shows through the clear direct verse. His poetry is academic, it is true, it smells of the lamp, but it still has a charm. The refinement of language, the subtlety and discrimination of taste, the perfection of form, the reflective spirit, all combine to insure for Matthew Arnold a certain immortality in the minds of lovers of poetry.

## ALFRED TENNYSON

It is safe to prophesy that in the perspective of the history of English poetry Tennyson will stand out above his contemporaries as the representative poet of his age. His life compasses all but a few years of the nineteenth century; his work has appealed not to a clique or a restricted circle, but to all classes of readers; his ideals, feelings, and instincts are, more than those of any other poet of the century, typical of the conventional gentleman of his time. New and startling ideas or expressions we seldom find in Tennyson, but we do find a full expression of the mental, emotional, and spiritual life of his contemporaries.

The incidents of his life are in no way sensational. He was always a quiet, retiring man, deeply devoted to his family, and, even in the days of his greatest fame, sincerely desirous of avoiding attention. He has been called unsocial, perhaps because he shunned notoriety. When his house had become the mecca of enthusiasts, he preferred to flee to the secluded parts of his land to escape their attention. He used to show to a favored few the tree overhanging his garden which Americans climbed to get a glimpse of him in his walks. He was in a rage at girls who sought his autographs. And yet, friend after friend has testified to the genial cordiality and simplicity of his conversation among his intimates. He got along splendidly with crusty Carlyle, he was devoted to FitzGerald, and his *In Memoriam* reveals better than any words can describe the positive passion of friendship of which he was capable.

Alfred Tennyson, the fourth of the twelve children of the Reverend George Tennyson, was born at Somersby, Lincolnshire, August 6, 1809. His father was rector of the parish, a man of more than usual ability, a linguist, with some talent in poetry, in painting, and in music. His mother, Elizabeth Fytche, the daughter of a clergyman, was noted about the countryside for her kindness of heart: "The wicked inhabitants of a neighboring village used to bring their dogs to her windows and beat them in order to be bribed to leave off by the gentle lady, or to make advantageous bargains by selling her the worthless curs."

The family life was unusually happy. The twelve children grew up in this remote village and invented for themselves romantic games. "The boys played great games, like Arthur's knights; they were champions and warriors defending a stone heap; or, again, they would set up opposing camps with a king in the midst of each. . . . When dinner-time came, and they all sat around the

table, each in turn put a chapter of his history underneath the potato-bowl, — long endless histories, chapter after chapter, diffuse, absorbing, unending, as are the stories of real life of which each sunrise opens on a new part." [1]

Tennyson's education was begun at Louth Grammar School, where he remained five years between 1815 and 1820, and continued under his father's tuition at Somersby until he was ready for college. His school life at Louth was always a black remembrance to him, — "How I did hate that school," he once said later, — but his years at home were peculiarly valuable. Not only did he profit by his father's direction of his studies, but by his access to the large, well-selected library and by the leisure to indulge his tastes. He had already shown a bent for poetry. His juvenile poems reveal an unusual excellence. In 1827, while he was still studying at home, a little volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers* contained the verse of Alfred and Charles Tennyson. The poems were brought out anonymously and received little attention.

In February of 1828 the "Two Brothers" matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. At first shy and without friends, they gradually became intimate with a little group of their fellows, including Richard Trench (later Archbishop of Dublin), James Spedding, Edward FitzGerald, Frederick Maurice (later the great liberal preacher), and Arthur Hallam. Alfred was looked upon already by these friends as a young poet of promise. In 1829 he won the Chancellor's prize medal by a poem entitled *Timbuctoo*, the first instance of the winning of this prize by a poem in blank verse. A year later he published a volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, which revealed by such lyrics as *Mariana*, *The Poet*, *Oriana* a mastery of melody and sincere love of beauty through occasional crudities of metrical construction (as in *Madeline* and *Adeline*).

A peculiar break in Tennyson's life was his enlistment (1830) with Hallam in the cause of the Spanish insurgents under Torrijos. His short campaign in Spain, unrelieved by the excitement of meeting an enemy, left upon him a lasting love for the Pyrenees. In the valley of Canterety he wrote part of the supremely beautiful *Œnone*.

In 1831, Tennyson, at the news of his father's serious illness, left Cambridge without taking his degree and returned to Somersby. A few days after his return his father died. The Tennysons continued to live at the rectory, however, for six years more, Alfred remaining there absorbed in his work. At the end of 1832 appeared his new volume, simply entitled *Poems*, containing a number of the lyrical masterpieces, as *The Lady of Shalott*, *Œnone*, and *The Lotos Eaters*, upon which Tennyson's fame rests. In this volume the true poet was at his best. Unhappily his genius was not recognized by the reviewers and he suffered, as had so many of his predecessors, from a savage attack in the *Quarterly*. Tennyson, always acutely sensitive to adverse criticism, was literally overwhelmed and, had it not been for the entreaties of his friends, might indeed have abandoned poetry entirely. For ten years thereafter he published nothing.

A great sorrow came to Tennyson in September of 1833 by the sudden death of Arthur Hallam. Combined with the *Quarterly* attack, this loss affected his health. He lost much of the robust strength which had been his and retired more and more into the seclusion of his own thoughts. He tried to grow hardened and indifferent to popular fame, and devoted himself heart and soul to the perfection of his poetry. In the next few years he wrote some of his finest verse and meditated long over the beginnings of *In Memoriam* and *Idylls of the King*.

Tennyson's popular fame dates from the two-volume edition of *Poems* with which in 1842 he broke his ten-years' silence. Together with many of his former lyrics revised, this collection included a number of the popular studies of English home-life, as *The Gardener's Daughter* and *The Lord of Burleigh*, as well as a more enduring class of poems like *Ulysses*, *Locksley Hall*, *Sir Galahad*, and *Morte d'Arthur*. The poems took the fancy of all classes, and Tennyson received what his son has called a "chorus of favorable reviews." The effect of his success upon Tennyson himself was immeasurable. Although his finances were low and his hopes of gaining a sufficient livelihood by his poems still might seem small, all idea of doing anything else was henceforth out of the question. The applause of the multitude and of the critics, however much

[1] Mrs. Ritchie, *Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, Browning*.

he may have thought he had steeled himself to indifference, reacted most favorably upon him.

The 1842 volume won for him the friendship of those few rare souls with whom he was best fitted to commune. His old friends, Spedding, Trench, Milnes, and the rest always continued his friends, but he became well known in a wider circle. "I saw Tennyson, when I was in London, several times. *He is decidedly the first of our living poets*, and I hope will live to give the world still better things," wrote Wordsworth in 1845. And Carlyle testified his admiration and devotion: in a letter to Emerson in 1844 he wrote: "Alfred is one of the few British or Foreign Figures (a not increasing number I think!) who are and remain beautiful to me; — a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother! . . . One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusty-dark hair; bright-laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; — smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic, — fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe."

By an unhappy investment Tennyson was reduced to poverty a few years after his 1842 volume had won such general recognition of worth, but this poverty was relieved in 1845 by a government pension of two hundred pounds a year. After that time his poetry, too, began to bring him in a moderate income, so that thenceforth the poet, though never a very wealthy man, was without financial worries.

In 1850 he married Emily Sellwood, to whom he had been long engaged. The alliance was ideally happy: "The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I married her," he said long afterwards. Tennyson's son bears witness to her loving devotion to her husband: "It was she who became my father's adviser in literary matters. 'I am proud of her intellect,' he wrote. With her he always discussed what he was working at; she transcribed his poems: to her, and to no one else, he referred for a final criticism before publishing. She, with her 'tender spiritual nature' and instinctive nobility of thought, was always by his side, a ready, cheerful, courageous, wise, and sympathetic counsellor."

In November of 1850, after the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson's position in contemporary poetry was recognized by his appointment to the laureateship. It is said that Lord Russell submitted to the queen the names of Professor Wilson, Henry Taylor, Sheridan Knowles, and Tennyson, and that Victoria was influenced in her choice of Tennyson by the admiration which the prince consort expressed for *In Memoriam*. In view of the subsequent fame of the various candidates, any other choice would have seemed absurd. Tennyson himself complained that his accession brought upon him "such shoals of poems that I am almost crazed with them; the two hundred million poets of Great Britain deluge me daily. Truly the Laureateship is no sinecure."

Outside of the publication of his successive volumes of poems his subsequent years of life were without noteworthy incident. In 1851 he made a trip to Italy and in 1853 he leased a little house and farm called Farringford, near the town of Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight. Later he bought this property, where he lived quietly for fourteen years. His constantly growing fame attracted such crowds of sight-seers that in 1867 he reluctantly left Farringford for a little estate near Haslemere where he built a country house called Aldworth. He was offered a baronetcy by Gladstone in 1873 and by Disraeli in 1874, but it was not until ten years later that he was prevailed upon to accept the honor — "For my own part," said he, "I shall regret my simple name all my life." March 11, 1884, he took his seat in the House of Lords as the first Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford. His health began to fail in his eighty-fourth year, although his mind remained clear to the end. He died peacefully at his home, Aldworth, October 6, 1892. He was buried with great ceremony in Westminster Abbey, October 12.

During these many years without noteworthy incident, his poetic faculty had been continuously exerted. A mere record of his productions will serve to show his industry and the high quality of his work: *The Princess* (1847); *In Memoriam* (1850); *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (1852); *Maud and Other Poems* (1855); 2d edition revised and enlarged (1856); *Idylls*

*of the King, including Enid, Vivien, Elaine,* and *Guinevere* (1859); *Enoch Arden* (1864); four more of the *Idylls, The Coming of Arthur, Holy Grail, Pelleas and Ettare,* and *The Passing of Arthur* (1869); the drama *Queen Mary* (1875); the drama *Harold* (1877); the two-act tragedy *The Cup* (1881); the drama *The Promise of May* (1882); *Becket* and *Tiresias and Other Poems* (1885); *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* (1886); *Demeter and Other Poems* (1889); *The Foresters,* a romantic play (1892). He was during the year of his death engaged upon poetic work which was published posthumously, *The Death of Œnone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems.*

## ROBERT BROWNING

"I HAD no idea that there was a perfectly sensible poet in the world, entirely free from vanity, jealousy, or any other littleness, and thinking no more of himself than if he were an ordinary man," wrote Benjamin Jowett, after meeting Browning, and Jowett's testimony to the sanity and the sociability of Browning is borne out by many other of his contemporaries. Browning was said to be the most captivating conversationalist in Europe; "But," said Mr. Freeman, "if a man can talk to be understood, why can't he write to be understood?" Freeman goes on to say that he found Browning much like other men, whereas he "had thought that his *Comitatus,* the Browning Society, would follow him everywhere to explain what he said." Few poets present such a puzzling personality as Browning. Simple, genial, social, virile, and happy, as a man, even in his lifetime he had the doubtful compliment of a society formed for the sole purpose of studying and interpreting his poetry. As Dr. Johnson would, according to Goldsmith, have made little fishes talk like whales, so Browning, when he took pen in hand, seemed to lose the power of simple, direct expression. Yet, through the undoubted difficulties of his verse, the greatness of the poet has won a wider and wider circle of readers with the passing of the years.

Robert Browning was born at Camberwell, a suburb of London, May 7, 1812. His father, Robert Browning, was for fifty years a clerk in the consols dividend room of the Bank of England. By frugality he accumulated a moderate fortune with which he indulged a rare taste in literature and art, having a library of more than six thousand volumes and a modest collection of prints. The poet's mother, Sarah Anne Wiedemann, was the daughter of William Wiedemann, a shipowner of a German family which had originally come from Hamburg and settled in Dundee, Scotland. Carlyle once spoke of her as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman," and Browning himself wrote, "She was a divine woman."

As a youth Browning was left unusual freedom to follow his own inclinations. After receiving the rudiments of an education in a Peckham school near by until he was fourteen years old, he had no further regular school training. For a few years he had a tutor in French, and at the age of eighteen he attended some lectures in Greek at London University, but his acquisitive mind found plenty of occupation in his father's well-chosen library and plenty of occupation in scribbling verses to be carefully scrutinized and criticized by his father. He was a restless, nervous, vigorous, somewhat self-willed youth, but not at all inclined to disabuse the liberty allowed him at home. "It would have been quite unpardonable in my case," he wrote in after years, "not to have done my best. My dear father put me in a condition most favourable for the best work I was capable of. When I think of the many authors who have had to fight their way through all sorts of difficulties, I have no reason to be proud of my achievement. My father secured for me all the ease and comfort which a literary man needs to do good work."

The only signs of precocity shown by Browning in his youth were his love for reading and his love for poetry, especially for writing poetry. In his reading he was especially fond of Quarles's *Emblems,* Walpole's *Letters,* the *Letters of Junius,* the works of the great Elizabethans, and Voltaire. Of modern poets, Byron, Shelley, and Keats were his favorites at first. At the age of twelve he gathered a number of his short poems into a volume called the *Incondita,* but was unable to find a publisher. His own first published poem was *Pauline,* issued anonymously in 1833 when he was twenty-one years old. This poem showed markedly the influence of Shelley.

In later years Browning regretted the publication of *Pauline*, tried to destroy all copies of it, and only consented to its republication in his collected poems when he realized that otherwise pirated editions would appear.

He had before this time definitely centered this ambitions upon a poetical career, declining to consider a business or professional training. Again we must pay tribute to the wisdom of his father who not only did not thwart his ambitions but encouraged them. The father's aid made travel and experience possible for the poet at a time when these were most essential for his mental and spiritual development. In the winter of 1833 he visited in St. Petersburg, and in the spring of 1834 he made his first trip to Italy, staying at Venice and Asolo. He was writing all the time during these months. Certain of his dramatic lyrics — notably *Johannes Agricola* and *Porphyria's Lover* — appeared during 1834 in a magazine, and his first great dramatic poem, *Paracelsus*, in book form over his own name in 1835. Upon its appearance John Forster, in an article entitled "Evidences of a New Genius for Dramatic Poetry," heralded Browning as worthy to rank with Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth: "He has entitled himself to a place among the acknowledged poets of the age," but *Paracelsus* did not gain a wide popularity. We find in the poem the subtle analysis of character and motive and the passages of lyric beauty and power which distinguish the best of his later work, but his subject was too far removed from the familiar knowledge of his own time and the style was not calculated to attract the general reader. Its moderate success enlarged his acquaintance among a select circle of literary men, however, so that he met such men as Horne, Hunt, Carlyle, Forster, Macready, Talfourd, Dickens, Wordsworth, and Landor. And it is interesting to read in Harriet Martineau's Autobiography: "Mr. Macready put *Paracelsus* into my hand, when I was staying at his house; and I read a canto before going to bed. For the first time in my life, I passed a whole night without sleeping a wink."

For one of these new friends, the famous actor and manager Macready, Browning undertook his next literary work, the play *Strafford*. This was produced in 1837 with fair success. Browning was encouraged to try his hand at the drama again, producing *King Victor and King Charles* (1842), *The Return of the Druses* and *A Blot in the 'Scutheon* (1843), *Colombe's Birthday* (1844), *Luria* and *A Soul's Tragedy* (1846). His writing of dramas ceased, however, after an unfortunate quarrel with Macready over the performance of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* in 1843, and after the merely moderate success of his plays. Truth to say, the stage was not the proper medium for Browning's genius. Although the plays have occasional clear and forcible situations and abound in passages of high poetic merit, the long and intricate analyses of morals and motives are too apt to weary the average audience.

After the publication of *Paracelsus* in 1835 and the favorable comment excited by his play *Strafford*, two years later, Browning was well on the way to literary eminence, but his friends and admirers were confounded by the publication in 1840 of his *Sordello*. The tales of its effect upon its contemporaries illustrate humorously the difficulties which remain until the present day. Tennyson remarked that he understood only the first and last lines, — "Who will, may hear Sordello's story told," and "Who would, has heard Sordello's story told," — and they were both lies. Harriet Martineau wrote: "The unbounded expectation I formed from that poem [*Paracelsus*] was sadly disappointed when *Sordello* came out. I was so wholly unable to understand it that I supposed myself ill." Douglas Jerrold, convalescing from an illness, tried to read it; a few lines alarmed him; "sentence after sentence brought no constructive thought to his brain. . . . The perspiration rolled from his forehead, and smiting his head, he sat down on his sofa, crying, 'O God, I am an idiot!'" The obscurity of *Sordello* is due largely to the ruthless excision of connectives and the consequent jamming together of the main words of the thought. The reader's attention is too severely tasked to fill the gaps which occur in the grammatical constructions page after page. The undoubted beauties of many passages are lost by the great difficulty of following consecutively the story of the poem. Browning in his poetry, we can say thankfully, never again approached the obscurity in *Sordello*.

His next poetical works appeared in a series of cheap pamphlets between 1841 and 1846.

Moxon, the publisher, informed Browning that he was bringing out editions of the Elizabethan dramatists in a cheap form and that the same cheap type could be used for some of the poet's work if so desired. Browning gladly seized the opportunity, and during these five years eight sixpenny brochures in yellow paper covers appeared under the title *Bells and Pomegranates*, indicating (he said) "alternation of poetry and thought." In addition to his dramas before mentioned, some of his most striking shorter poems appeared in the series, including *Pippa Passes*, a number of lyrics now grouped under *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances* in editions of Browning (as *Cavalier Tunes, Incident of the French Camp, Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister, The Laboratory, Cristina, The Flight of the Duchess, The Statue and the Bust*, etc.). These poems represent the height of the peculiar type of poetry in which Browning stands unrivaled. Once read, they fix themselves in the mind as the most forcible expression of their respective moods. They are essentially dramatic in situation and are expressed with a strength and originality that should have drawn the eyes of all contemporaries to them. Perhaps the reason they did not succeed notably lay in the influence of *Sordello*, which still lay as a weight over Browning's early admirers.

A more important result of the publication of *Bells and Pomegranates* than its failure to win popular applause was the introduction it brought to Elizabeth Barrett. This great romantic crisis in Browning's life he met with the courage that he breathed through all his poems. Miss Barrett was an invalid, tenderly devoted to a narrow-minded father, who through the successive years of her illness had gradually come to resent even the idea of her return to health. The robust Browning, after a correspondence, met and loved Miss Barrett. The impossibility of gaining her father's consent to marriage was evident, and even Miss Barrett herself could not at first dream of such a consummation: "There is nothing to see in me, nothing to hear in me," she wrote to Browning; "I am a weed fit for the ground and darkness." The crisis came when, in the fall of 1846, Mr. Barrett refused to allow his daughter to go to Italy, the only course which, according to the physician, promised any improvement for her health. In the face of this attitude, much against his will Browning planned an elopement and a clandestine marriage, to which he gained Miss Barrett's consent. They were married secretly September 12, and a week later she stole away from the Barrett home, joined Browning, and went to Italy for the winter. Mr. Barrett never forgave his daughter, but in Italy she recovered a measure of health she had not thought possible. The married life of the couple was one of almost ideal happiness.

Browning's life henceforward is not marked by any outward incident of importance. For fifteen years he and his wife lived most of the time in Italy, making their home in the Casa Guidi in Florence, and living the quiet, secluded life necessary for the maintenance of Mrs. Browning's fragile health. June 29, 1861, she died there, and Browning was completely crushed by her loss. He never again returned to the city of Florence.

His poetical production during these years in Italy was comparatively small — *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* in 1850, and *Men and Women*, containing much of his best work, in 1855. After his wife's death he settled in London and resumed his writing, publishing *Dramatis Personæ* in 1864 and *The Ring and the Book* in the winter of 1868–69. *The Ring and the Book* is regarded as his masterpiece. In audacity of idea and skill of execution it marks the height of Browning's originality. Mrs. Orr narrates the source of the poem: "Mr. Browning was strolling one day through a square in Florence, the Piazza San Lorenzo, which is a standing market for old clothes, old furniture, and old curiosities of every kind, when a parchment-covered book attracted his eye, from amidst the artistic or nondescript rubbish of one of the stalls. It was a record of a murder which had taken place in Rome. . . . The book proved, on examination, to contain the whole history of the case, as carried on in writing, after the fashion of those days; pleadings and counter-pleadings, the depositions of defendants and witnesses; manuscript letters announcing the execution of the murderer; and the 'instrument of the Definitive Sentence' which established the perfect innocence of the murdered wife: those various documents having been collected and bound together by some person interested in the trial. . . . Mr. Browning bought the whole for the value of eightpence, and it became the raw material of what

appeared four years later as *The Ring and the Book*." All the skill of the mental and moral analyst is exerted to dissect the motives, arguments, and gossip in the case, and the power and imagination of the poet are combined to give a vivid picture of the persons and the environment.

His increasing fame was recognized by the honors that fell to him thick and fast. In 1867, Oxford gave him its M.A. degree and Balliol elected him a fellow; in 1868 and 1884, he refused the proffered rectorship of St. Andrews; in 1879, Cambridge conferred upon him the LL.D.; in 1881, the Browning Society was founded by Dr. Furnivall; in 1882, Oxford honored him with the D.C.L. degree, and in 1884, Edinburgh with the LL.D.; and in 1886 he was appointed foreign correspondent for the Royal Academy. His circle of friends widened to include all the noted men of his time and he exerted himself to be socially agreeable.

Browning continued to write almost to the very end of his life, his work always original and forceful, although his later poems show only in patches the marvelous imaginative grasp and insight of his earlier. In the seventies he published a group of poems adapted from Greek originals, *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871), *Aristophanes' Apology* (1875), and *The Agamemnon of Æschylus* (1877). In 1879 he published the first series of the *Dramatic Idylls*, and a year later the second series; in 1884 he issued *Ferishtah's Fancies;* in 1887, *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance.*

Browning died at his son's house in Venice, December 12, 1889, from heart failure following a bronchial attack. He was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, December 31. A verse from the *Epilogue to Asolando* expresses better than can another's words the courage with which he had faced the stress of life.

> One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.

This *Epilogue* was the last poem he ever wrote and he is reported to have said, as he perused the lines: "It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth; and as it's truth, it shall stand."

GLOSSARY

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND TITLES

# GLOSSARY

**abeigh**, *adv.*, aloof, off.
**aboon**, *prep.*, above.
**abrayde**, *pt. s.*, started (from sleep).
**abread**, *adv.*, abroad.
**abye**, *v.*, to pay for.
**accompted**, *pp.*, accounted.
**achat**, *n.*, purchase.
**adoun**, *adv.*, downwards.
**ae**, *adj.*, one.
**affyle**, *v.*, to file, i.e., to render smooth.
**afray**, *n.*, alarm, terror, fright.
**agast**, *pp.*, scared, frightened.
**agayn**, *adv.*, again.
**agley**, *adv.*, askew.
**agraste**, *v.*, to favor.
**agree . . . to**, *v.*, accord with.
**aiblins**, *adv.*, maybe, perhaps.
**ain**, *adj.*, own.
**airts**, *n.*, the directions.
**al**, *adj.*, all.
**al be**, *conj.*, although.
**alday**, *adv.*, always.
**alderbest**, *adv.*, best of all.
**ale-stake**, *n.*, ale-stake, a horizontal pole projecting from an alehouse to support a sign or brush.
**algate**, *adv.*, always.
**allye**, *v.*, to ally.
**allyed**, *pp.*, allied.
**als**, also.
**als . . . as**, so . . . as.
**als . . . and**, both . . . and.
**amate**, *v.*, to dishearten, dismay, subdue.
**amblere**, *n.*, an ambling nag.
**amis**, *adv.*, wrongly.
**amis**, *n.*, a hood, or cape with a hood.
**ance**, *adv.*, once.
**anlas**, *n.*, a short two-edged knife, broad at the hilt and tapering to the point, formerly worn at the girdle.
**antiphoner**, *n.*, anthem-book.
**apyked**, *pp.*, trimmed, adorned.
**areedes**, *v.*, to declare, tell, counsel.
**areste**, *n.*, arrest.
**arras**, *n.*, tapestry, rich figured fabric.
**arrerage**, *n. pl.*, arrears.
**arse**, *n.*, ass.
**artow**, *for* art thou.
**arwes**, *n. pl.*, arrows.
**aryve**, *v.*, to arrive.
**ascendent**, *n.*, ascendant.
**aspye**, *n.*, spy.
**assaid**, *pp.*, assailed.
**assente**, *v.*, to assent.
**assoille**, *v.*, pardon, absolve.
**assoilling**, *n.*, absolution.
**asterte**, *v.*, to escape.
**astored**, *pp.*, stored, provided.
**attamed**, *pp.*, broached.
**atte best**, in the best way.
**Atte Bowe**, At Bow.
**auctours**, *n. pl.*, authors.
**Augustyn**, St. Augustine.
**auld**, *adj.*, old.
**ava**, at all, of all.
**availle**, *v.*, to avail.
**avale**, *v.*, to descend, subside, droop.
**avantour**, *n.*, boaster.
**avisoun**, *n.*, vision.
**awayt**, in wait.
**axeth**, seekest (*v. 2d pers. sing.*).
**Ay**, *adv.*, aye, ever.

**bace**, *adj.*, low.
**baite**, *v.*, to bate.
**band**, i.e., tie.
**banes**, *n.*, bones.
**bar**, *pp.*, bare, carried.
**bare**, carried (*v. preterit*).
**barkit**, *pp.*, barked.
**barley-bree**, *n.*, ale, whisky.
**barres**, *n. pl.*, stripes across a girdle.
**batailed**, *pp.*, crenelated.
**bauldricke**, *n.*, a belt, sometimes richly ornamented, worn over one shoulder, across the breast, and under the opposite arm, to support the sword, the bugle, etc.
**bawdrik**, *n.*, baldric. See **bauldricke**.
**bawk**, *n.*, a field path.
**bawsnt**, *pp.*, white-streaked.
**beggestere**, *n.*, beggar, properly a female beggar.
**behight**, *v.*, to vow, promise; to deliver, grant, adjudge.
**ben**, *n.*, parlour.
**bene**, *n.*, bean.
**bere**, *n.*, bier.
**berne**, *n.*, barn.
**beryis**, *n. pl.*, berries.
**bet**, *v.*, to go quickly.
**bet**, *adv.*, better.
**beth war**, beware.
**bett**, *pp.*, beat, beaten.
**beuks**, *n.*, books.
**bever**, *n.*, drink, drinking, a light repast between meals.
**beye**, *v.*, to buy.
**bicched bones**, dice (*n. plural*).
**bield**, *n.*, a shelter, a sheltered spot.
**bifel**, befell (*v. preterit*).
**bifore**, *adv.*, before.
**biforn**, *prep.*, before.
**big**, *v.*, to build.
**bigonne**, begun (*v. preterit*).
**biknewe**, *pp.*, confessed.
**bile**, *n.*, beak.
**bill**, *n.*, a bull.
**billies**, *n. pl.*, fellows, comrades, brothers.
**binethe**, *prep.*, beneath, within.
**binne**, *n.*, bin, hutch, chest.
**birkie**, *n.*, a fellow (usually implies conceit).
**birks**, *n.*, birches.
**bisette**, employed (*v. preterit*).
**bismotered**, *pp.*, besmuttered, dirtied.
**bisyde**, *prep.*, from the neighborhood of.
**bit**, *adj.*, small.
**biwreyest**, revealest (*v. present 2d. pers. sing.*).
**blake**, *adj.*, black.
**Blankmanger**, *n.*, Blanc Mange.
**blastie**, *n.*, a damned creature.
**blate**, *adj.*, modest.
**bleer't**, *pp.*, bleared.
**bleezin**, *adj.*, blazing.
**blellum**, *n.*, a babbler.
**blent**, *pp.*, blinded.
**blink**, *n.*, a moment, a short period.
**Boece**, Boethius.
**boles**, *n. pl.*, bulls.
**bollet**, *n.*, bullet.
**boon**, *n.*, bone.
**boortrees**, the shrub elder — planted much of old in hedges in barnyards.
**bord**, *n.*, table.
**bost**, *n.*, boast.
**bote**, *n.*, salvation.
**botes**, *n. pl.*, boots.
**boughtes**, *n. pl.*, coils.
**bour**, *n.*, inner room.
**bourde**, jest (*v. present 1 pers sing.*).

**bracer,** *n.*, bracer, a guard for the arm in archery.
**Bradwardyn,** *n.*, Bishop.
**braes,** *n. pl.*, small hills.
**brast,** burst out (*v. preterit*).
**brattle,** *n.*, a spurt, a scamper.
**braw,** *adj.*, gaily dressed, fine, handsome.
**breares,** *n. pl.*, briars.
**breech,** *n. pl.*, breeches.
**breem,** *n.*, breem, a fish.
**brenninge,** burning (*v. present partc.*).
**brent,** *pp.* burnt.
**brent,** *adj.*, straight.
**bretful,** *adj.*, brimful.
**briddes,** *n. pl.*, birds.
**brinstane,** *n.*, brimstone.
**brock,** *n.*, a badger.
**brode,** *adj.*, broad.
**brouke,** *v.*, to enjoy, use.
**buirdly,** *adj.*, stout, stalwart.
**bulles,** *n. pl.*, papal bulls.
**bulte,** *v.*, to sift.
**bum-clock,** *n.*, a humming beetle.
**burdies,** *n. pl.*, maidens.
**burdoun,** *n.*, burden of a song, bass accompaniment.
**Burgeys,** *n.*, burgess, citizen.
**burn,** *n.*, rivulet.
**but-if,** *conj.*, unless.
**butt,** *n.*, kitchen.
**butty,** *adj.*, rooty.
**by-cause,** because.
**byke,** *n.*, bees nest, hive.
**byre,** *n.*, cowhouse.
**byte,** *v.*, to bite, burn.

**caas,** *n. pl.*, cases of law.
**ca'd,** *pp.*, called.
**caller,** *adj.*, cool, refreshing.
**cam,** *pr. s.* of come; came.
**cannilie,** *adv.*, quietly, prudently, cautiously.
**Canon,** *n.*, the "Canon," title of a book by Avicenna.
**canstow,** *for* canst thou.
**cantie,** *adj.*, cheerful, lively, jolly.
**cantraip,** *adj.*, magic, witching.
**canty,** see **cantie.**
**cappe,** *n.*, cap.
**carf,** *v.*, to cut, carve.
**carke,** *n.*, load, charge, burden.
**carl** *or* **carle,** *n.*, a rustic, countryman.
**carpe,** *v.*, to talk, discourse.
**cas,** *n.*, case, affair, circumstance, condition.
**castel-wal,** *n.*, castle wall.
**catapuce,** *n.*, caper, spurge.
**catel,** *n.*, property, wealth, possession.
**centaure,** *n.*, centaury.
**centonell,** *n.*, sentinel.
**ceruce,** *n.*, white lead.
**change-house,** *n.*, tavern.
**chaunterie,** *n.*, an endowment for a priest to sing mass.
**chear,** *n.*, chair, cheer.
**chere,** *n.*, behavior; also entertainment.
**cherles,** *n. pl.*, churls.
**chevisaunce,** *n.*, dealing for profit.
**chide,** *v.*, to blame.
**chiels,** *n. pl.*, fellows, a young fellow, indicates approval.
**chivachye,** *n.*, a military expedition.
**cink,** five.
**claes,** *n. pl.*, clothes.
**cleped,** *pp.*, called.
**clepen,** *v.*, to call, name.
**clergeon,** *n.*, chorister boy.
**clerkis,** *n. pl.*, writers, scholars.
**clokke,** *n.*, clock.
**clout,** *n.*, bit of cloth.
**cloutes,** *n. pl.*, rags.
**clyme,** *v.*, to climb.
**coche,** *n.*, coach.
**coft,** *pp.*, bought.
**coillons,** *n. pl.*, testicles.
**cokes,** *n. pl.*, cooks.
**cokewold,** *v.*, to deceive, play false.
**col-fox,** *n.*, coal-fox, black fox.
**colpons,** *n. pl.*, shreds, bundles.
**complecciouns,** *n. pl.*, complexions.
**conne,** *v.*, to con, learn.
**conning,** *n.*, experience.
**consent,** *n.*, harmony.
**contek,** *n.*, strife, contest.
**contrarie,** *n.*, opposite, foe, opponent.
**cood,** *n.*, cud.
**coost,** *v.*, to throw off.
**cootie,** *n.*, a wooden dish.
**cop,** *n.*, top.
**cope,** *n.*, cope.
**coppe,** *n.*, cup.
**corages,** *n.*, heart, spirit, natures.
**coronall,** a circlet for the head, a crown; also, a garland.
**corse,** *n.*, corpse.
**coste,** *n.*, coast.
**cote,** *n.*, skirt, petticoat or gown (for a woman).
**counterfesaunce,** *n.*, counterfeiting, imposture.
**countour,** *n.*, auditor.
**countrefete,** *v.*, to counterfeit, imitate.
**cours,** *n.*, course, path, orbit.
**courtepy,** *n.*, an upper short coat of coarse material.
**couthe,** *pp.*, *pl.* well-known.
**covent,** *n.*, convent, conventual body.
**coverchiefs,** *n. pl.*, kerchief worn on the head.
**covyne,** *n.*, deceitfulness.
**crack,** *n.*, tales, talk.
**cranreuch,** *n.*, hoar-frost, rime.
**creast,** *n.*, crest.
**creeshie,** *adj.*, greasy.
**croked,** *adj.*, crooked.
**croose,** *adj.*, cocksure.
**cropt,** *pp.*, bitten, pulled or snipped off.
**croud,** *n.*, crowd, an ancient Celtic instrument with a rectangular body and six strings; fiddle.
**crouse,** *adv.*, cheerfully, lively, jolly.
**crowdie-time,** *n.*, porridge-time.
**crulte,** *adj.*, curly.
**crummockcudgel,** *n.*, crooked staff.
**crump,** *adj.*, crisp.
**cuif,** *n.*, a dull fellow, a dolt.
**curchie,** *n.*, curtsey.
**cure,** *n.*, attention.
**cushat,** *n.*, wood pigeon.
**cut,** *n.*, lot.
**cutty-sark,** *n.*, short skirt.

**daffin,** *n.*, larking fun.
**dails,** *n.*, deals, planks.
**daimen-icker,** *n.*, an occasional ear of corn.
**daliaunce,** *n.*, gossip.
**Dan,** Sir, Lord, title of respect.
**darg,** *n.*, labor, task, a day's labor.
**darrayne,** *v.*, to order, manage; to wage (battle); to prove by wager or battle.
**Daun,** *n.*, (for Dominus), Lord, Sir, title of respect.
**daunce (the olde),** the old game of love.
**dawds,** *n. pl.*, lumps and larg portions.
**dawening,** *n.*, dawning.
**dawtit,** *pp.*, fondled, petted.
**deas,** *n. pl.*, dice.
**defeasance,** *n.*, defeat.
**defended,** *v.*, forbidden.
**defouled,** *pp.*, defiled.
**Deil-haet,** nothing (tho the devil have it).
**Deils,** Devils.
**del (a greet),** *n.*, a great deal, largely, to a large extent.
**delen ger,** to have dealing with.
**deliverly,** *adv.*, nimbly.
**demen,** *v.*, to ask.
**depe,** *adj.*, deep.
**depeint,** *pp.*, stained.
**dere,** *adj.*, deer.
**descant,** *n.*, the melody or

counterpoint sung to the cantus or plain song.
**desolaat,** *adj.*, shunned.
**despitous,** *adj.*, merciless.
**desport,** *n.*, sport, diversion, merriment, amusement.
**despyt,** in contempt of you.
**detteless,** *adj.*, free from debt.
**deye,** *n.*, dairy woman.
**deyntee,** *adj.*, good.
**deys,** *n.*, daïs, platform, the high table in the dining-room.
**diapred,** *adj.*, variegated.
**digestyves,** *n. pl.*, digestives.
**dight,** *v.*, to dress, array.
**digne,** *adj.*, worthy.
**ding,** *v.*, to beat, surpass.
**dinna,** do not.
**dirl,** *v.*, to vibrate, ring.
**dischevele,** *adj.*, with his hair hanging loosely down.
**dispence,** *n.*, expenditure, expense.
**dispiteous,** *adj.*, malicious, pitiless.
**dites,** raises.
**dizzens,** dozen.
**doghtren,** *n. pl.*, daughters.
**dokes,** *n. pl.*, ducks.
**domes,** *n. pl.*, decisions, judgments.
**dong,** *n.*, dung, manure.
**donsie,** *adj.*, unlucky.
**doon,** *v.*, to do.
**dormant,** *n.*, table dormant, a permanent side table.
**dorste,** durst.
**doun,** *adv.*, down.
**doure,** *adj.*, stubborn, obstinate.
**dow,** are able.
**drave,** drove.
**drecched,** *pp.*, vexed, troubled.
**drede (it is no drede),** without doubt.
**dreriment,** *n.*, gloom.
**dreynt,** *pp.*, drowned.
**droddum,** *n.*, the breech.
**droghte,** *n.*, drought.
**drough,** *pp.*, drew.
**drouthy,** *adj.*, thirsty.
**drumlie,** *adj.*, turbid.
**duddie,** *adj.*, ragged.
**dyde,** *pp.*, died.

**earst,** *adv.*, formerly, a while before or ago.
**echon,** each one.
**eek,** *adv.*, also, moreover.
**een,** *n. pl.*, eyes.
**eerie,** *adj.*, weird, inspiring ghostly fear.
**eet,** *pp.*, ate.
**eftsoones,** *adv.*, soon after, presently, forthwith.
**eir,** *n.*, air.
**eke,** *adv.*, also, moreover.
**eldritch,** *adj.*, horrible, unearthly.
**Ellebor,** *n.*, Hellebore, a kind of poison.
**elles,** *adv.*, else, otherwise.
**embard,** *pp.*, confined, imprisoned.
**embayd,** *pp.*, enclosed.
**embosse,** *v.*, to encase, ensheath.
**emboyled,** *pp.*, boiled.
**emperst,** *pp.*, pierced, transfixed.
**endyte,** *v.*, to write, dictate.
**engyned,** *pp.*, tortured, racked.
**enhaunst,** *pp.*, raised, exalted.
**enranged,** *pp.*, disposed, drawn up.
**entraille,** *n.*, entrails.
**entrayled,** *pp.*, entwined, interlaced.
**er,** *conj.*, before.
**Erchedeknes,** *n.*, Archdeacon's.
**esed,** *pp.*, entertained.
**esloyne,** *v.*, to keep aloof from.
**espye,** *v.*, to espy, observe.
**essoyne,** *n.*, excuse.
**estat,** *n.*, estate, state, condition.
**estatlich,** *adv.*, stately, dignified.
**ete,** *v.*, to eat.
**ettle,** *n.*, aim.
**everich,** every.
**everichon,** every one.
**every-deel,** *adv.*, every whit.
**ewghen,** *adj.*, yewen, of yew.
**excheat,** *n.*, escheat.
**expect,** *v.*, to await.
**ey,** *n.*, egg.
**eyes (of hawks),** *adj.*, newly fledged.
**eydent,** *adj.*, diligent.
**eyen,** *n. pl.*, eyes.
**eyled,** *pp.*, ailed.
**eyleth,** aileth (*v. present*).

**fa',** *n.*, a fall, lot, portion.
**fadres,** *n. pl.*, ancestors.
**faille,** *v.*, to fail.
**fair,** *n.*, a good one.
**falding,** *n.*, a sort of coarse cloth.
**fand,** *pp.*, found.
**faren,** *pp.*, gone.
**farls,** *n. pl.*, small thin oat cakes.
**farsed,** *pp.*, stuffed.
**faste,** *v.*, to fast.
**fause,** *adj.*, false.
**fawsont,** *adj.*, seemly, decent, honest.
**faytor,** *n.*, an impostor.
**feateously,** *adv.*, deftly.
**fecche,** *v.*, to fetch.
**fecht,** *n.*, fight.
**feck,** *n.*, the bulk, the most part.
**felicitee,** *n.*, happiness.
**fell,** *adj.*, keen, cruel, dreadful pungent.
**felly,** *adv.*, fiercely, cruelly, barbarously.
**fen,** *n.*, chapter or subdivision of Avicenna's book called the *Canon*.
**fer,** *adj.*, far.
**fere,** *n.*, a companion, mate.
**ferlie,** *n.*, a wonder (used contemptuously).
**ferme,** *n.*, farm.
**ferne,** *pl.* of **ferren,** distant, remote.
**ferre** or **ferrer,** *adv.*, farther.
**ferreste,** farthest.
**fest,** *n.*, fist.
**festne,** *v.*, to fasten.
**fet,** *pp.*, brought.
**fethered,** *pp.*, feathered.
**fetishly,** *adv.*, elegantly.
**fient-a,** nothing of a.
**fient haet o',** not one of them.
**fiere,** *n.*, comrade.
**fil,** fell (*preterit of fall*).
**filch,** *v.*, to steal, pilfer.
**finch,** *n.*, finch (bird), "pulle a finch," pluck a dupe.
**fithele,** *n.*, fiddle.
**flainen** or **flannen,** *adj.*, flannel.
**flasket,** *n.*, a long shallow basket.
**fleeched,** *pp.*, wheedled.
**fleigh,** flew (*v. preterit*).
**fley,** *pp.*, flew.
**flichterin,** fluttering, as young nestlings when their dam approaches.
**flour,** *n.*, flower.
**floytinge,** playing on the flute (*v. present partc.*).
**folwing,** following (*v. present partc.*).
**fome,** *n.*, foam.
**fone,** *n. pl.*, foes.
**foot-mantel,** *n.*, foot cloth, a safeguard to cover the skirt.
**for,** instead of.
**forlete,** *v.*, to abandon, forsake.
**forn-cast,** *pp.*, premeditated.
**forneys,** *n.*, furnace.
**for-pyned,** *pp.*, wasted away.
**fors,** *n.*, force.
**for-sleuthen,** *v.*, to waste in sloth.
**forster,** *n.*, forester.
**fortunen,** *v.*, to give fortune (good or bad).
**for-why,** *conj.*, wherefor, why.

**forwiting,** *n.*, foreknowledge.
**forwoot,** foreknows, forsees (*v. present*).
**fother,** *n.*, a load; properly, a cartload.
**fou',** *adj.*, full.
**foule,** *adj.*, wretched.
**foure,** four.
**fowles,** *n. pl.*, birds.
**Frankeleyns,** *n. pl.*, Franklins.
**frayneth,** prays, beseeches (*v. present*).
**fruytesteres,** *n. pl.*, fruit sellers.
**fumetere,** *n.*, fumitory.
**fundement,** *n.*, fundament, buttocks.
**furms,** *n. pl.*, wooden forms.
**fustian,** *n.*, fustian.
**fyke,** *v.*, to fuss, fidget.
**fyl'd,** *pp.*, defiled, fouled.
**fyneste,** *adj.* (*superl.*), finest.
**fyrie,** *adj.*, fiery.
**fyr-reed,** *adj.*, red as fire, flaming.

**gabbe,** lie, speak idly (*v. present*).
**gadrede,** *pp.*, gathered.
**gaed,** went (*v. preterit*).
**galingale,** *n.*, sweet cyperus. A spice was prepared from the root of the plant.
**game,** *n.*, amusement, fun, merriment.
**gamed,** it pleased.
**gan,** began (*v. preterit*).
**gang,** *v.*, to walk, go.
**gargat,** *n.*, throat.
**gars,** causes, makes, compels (*v. present*).
**gart,** *pp.*, made.
**gash,** *adj.*, wise.
**gat-tothed,** *adj.*, having the teeth far apart.
**gaude,** *n.*, trick, course of trickery.
**Gaufred,** Geoffrey de Vinsauf, Anglo-Norman Trouvère.
**gaun,** going (*v. pr. part.*).
**gawsie,** *adj.*, big and joyous.
**gaytres beryies,** berries of the goat tree.
**gear,** *n.*, money, wealth.
**gees,** *n. pl.*, geese.
**gentil,** *adj.*, mild in manner.
**geordie,** *n.*, guinea.
**gere,** *n.*, utensils.
**gerner,** *n.*, garner.
**gies,** *v. pr. s.*, gives.
**gills,** *n. pl.*, glasses of whiskey.
**gin,** *conj.*, if.
**gin,** *prep.*, against, by.
**gipoun,** *n.*, a short cassock or doublet.
**gipser,** *n.*, pouch, purse.
**girland,** *n.*, a garland.
**giusts,** *n. pl.*, jousts, tilts.
**gizz,** *n.*, wig.
**glaikit,** *adj.*, foolish, thoughtless, giddy.
**glowr,** *v.*, to stare.
**glyster,** *n.*, an injection, an enema.
**gnarre,** *v.*, to snarl.
**gobet,** *n.*, piece, morsel.
**golet,** *n.*, throat, gullet.
**goliardeys,** *n.*, buffoon, a scurrilous talker.
**goost,** goest (*v. present*).
**goot,** *n.*, goat.
**gorcock,** *n.*, the moorcock.
**governaunce,** *n.*, management, control.
**gowd,** *n.*, gold.
**graith,** *n.*, garb, attire.
**granes,** *n. pl.*, groans.
**grat,** *pp.*, wept.
**gree,** *n.*, the prize.
**greyn,** *n.*, grain, corn.
**griesly,** *adj.*, grisly, horrible, grim.
**griple,** *adj.*, griping, grasping.
**grope,** *v.*, to try, test, examine.
**grosse,** *v.*, to increase.
**grote,** *n.*, groat, (Dutch) coin.
**grozet,** *n.*, gooseberry.
**gruf,** *adv.*, on their faces, groveling.
**grushie,** *adj.*, growing.
**grys,** *n.*, a gray fur.
**guerdon,** *n.*, reward, recompense.
**guidmen,** *n.*, husband.
**guid-willie,** *adj.*, hearty, full of good will.
**gyse,** *n.*, guise, way.

**habergeoun,** *n.*, a hauberk or coat of mail.
**habundant,** *adj.*, abundant.
**haffets,** *n. pl.*, the temples, the side of the head.
**hafflins-wise,** *adv.*, half, partly.
**haith,** *n.*, faith.
**hald,** *n.*, holding, abiding place.
**hallan,** *n.*, a partition between the door of a cottage and a fireplace.
**halse,** *v.*, to conjure, beseech.
**halwes,** *n. pl.*, shrines of saints.
**hame,** *n.*, home.
**hap,** *n.*, that which happens suddenly or unexpectedly, chance, fortune.
**hap,** *v.*, to cover up, clothe.
**happer,** *n.*, hopper (of a mill).
**hap-step-an-lowp,** hop-step-and-leap.
**harn,** *n.*, coarse cloth.
**harre,** *n.*, hinge.
**harrow,** *interjection*, help.
**hasardrye,** *n.*, gambling.
**hasty accidents,** the accidents of haste, i.e. the marriage day was probably changed at short notice to a date earlier than that set originally.
**haud,** *v.*, to hold, keep.
**hauffet,** *n.*, temple locks.
**haunt,** *n.*, usual resort.
**hauteyn,** *adj.*, loud.
**hawe,** *n.*, yard, enclosure.
**hawkie's,** *n.*, cow, esp. a white-faced cow.
**healsome,** *adj.*, wholesome.
**heastes,** *n. pl.*, hests, commands.
**heben,** *adj.*, ebony, of ebon.
**heberwe,** *n.*, inn.
**hech,** exclamation.
**heed,** *n.*, head.
**heep,** *n.*, great number, crowd.
**heer,** *n.*, hair.
**heer,** *adv.*, here.
**hegges,** *n. pl.*, hedges.
**hele,** *n.*, cure, recovery.
**heled,** *pp.*, healed.
**helpelesse,** *adj.*, irremediable.
**hem,** *pron.*, them.
**heng** or **henge,** *v.*, to hang.
**henne,** *adv.*, hence.
**hente,** *pp.*, seized, caught hold of.
**hente,** *v.*, to acquire, get.
**her,** *adv.*, here.
**herde,** *n.*, herd, keeper of cattle.
**herien, herieth,** praise (*v., present*).
**herteless,** *adj.*, heartless.
**hertely,** *adv.*, heartily.
**heryinge,** *n.*, praise.
**hestes,** *n. pl.*, commands.
**het,** *adj.*, hot.
**heughs,** *n. pl.*, crags, steep banks.
**heve,** *v.*, to heave, lift.
**hewe,** *n.*, hew, color, complexion.
**hewed,** *adj.*, colored, hewed.
**heyre,** *adj.*, hair, made of hair.
**hider,** *adv.*, hither.
**hight** or **highte,** *pp.*, called, named, mentioned by name.
**him happede,** it happened.
**hindreste,** *adj.*, hindmost.
**hir,** *pron.*, her, them, their.
**hirplin,** *adj.*, limping, hobbling.
**histie,** *adj.*, bare.
**hizzies,** *n. pl.*, huzzies, wenches.
**hob,** *n.*, fairy, sprite, elf.
**hoddin,** *n.*, the motion of a countryman riding on a cart horse.

**holpen**, *pp.*, helped, aided.
**holt**, *n.*, wood, plantation.
**hond**, *n.*, hand.
**hool**, *adj.*, whole, healed.
**hoom**, *n.*, home.
**hoomly**, *adv.*, in a homely way.
**hoot**, *adj.*, hot.
**hord**, *n.*, treasure.
**hore**, hair; her; hoar; ore; whore.
**hote**, *pp.*, called.
**hote**, *v.*, to command, promise.
**houghmagandie**, *n.*, fornication.
**houlet**, *n.*, owl.
**houped**, *pp.*, whooped.
**houres**, *n. pl.*, hours.
**howkin**, digging (*v. pr. part.*).
**howkit**, *v.*, to dig out.
**hurdies**, *n. pl.*, loins, crupper, buttocks.
**hye**, *n.*, hedge.
**hyer**, *adj.*, higher.
**hyne**, *n.*, servant, peasant.
**hyred**, *pp.*, hired.

**iangleth**, chatter, prate (*v. present*).
**ieet**, *n.*, jet.
**Ilioun**, Ilion, the citadel of Troy.
**ilk or ilka**, each, every.
**ilke**, *adj.*, same, very.
**ingle**, *n.*, the fire, fireplace.
**inspired**, *pp.*, quickened.
**intendiment**, *n.*, attention, consideration.
**iolitee**, *n.*, sport, amusement.
**ire**, *n.*, anger.
**iren**, *n.*, iron.
**ither**, *adj.*, other, each other, one another.

**jads**, *n. pl.*, jades.
**japes**, *n. pl.*, tricks.
**jauk**, *v.*, to trifle, dally.
**Jewerye**, Jews quarters.
**jow**, a verb denoting both the swing and peal of a large bell.

**kail**, *n.*, cabbage.
**kain**, *n.*, rents in kind.
**kebbuck**, *n.*, cheese.
**keeks**, *v.*, to look, peep.
**keep**, *v.*, to pay heed.
**kend**, *pp.*, known.
**kend**, *adj.*, kind.
**kiaugh**, *n.*, cark, anxiety.
**kirk**, *n.*, church.
**kirn**, *n.*, the churn; also a harvest home.
**kirtle**, *n.*, a man's tunic or coat.
**knarre**, *n.*, a knotted, thickset fellow.
**knobbles**, *n. pl.*, knobs, large pimples.
**knowes**, *n. pl.*, knees.
**kye**, *n.*, kine, cows.
**kyn**, *n. pl.*, kine, cows.
**kynde**, *n.*, nature, disposition.

**laas**, *n.*, thick string.
**ladde**, *pp.*, lead.
**lafte**, *pp.*, left.
**lakkede**, *pp.*, lacked.
**lang syne**, long since, long ago.
**lasse**, *adj.*, (comp.) less.
**lat.**, *pp.*, let.
**latoun**, *n.*, latten, a compound metal, containing chiefly copper and zinc.
**Lauriol**, *n.*, spurge-laurel, Daphne Laureola.
**lave**, *n.*, the rest, remainder, the others.
**lav'rocks**, *n. pl.*, the larks.
**lazar**, *n.*, leper.
**lear**, *n.*, lore, learning.
**leche**, *n.*, physician.
**leef, you so leef**, so desired by you.
**lee-lang**, live long.
**leeze-me-on**, commend me to.
**lemes**, *n. pl.*, limbs.
**lenger**, *adj.*, longer.
**leoun**, *n.*, lion.
**lere**, *v.*, to learn.
**lerned**, *pp.*, learnt.
**lese**, *v.*, lose.
**lesinges**, *n. pl.*, losses.
**lest**, *n.*, delight.
**leste**, *pp.*, pleased.
**lette**, *v.*, to tarry.
**letuaries**, *n. pl.*, electuaries.
**leuk**, *n.*, look.
**leve**, *n.*, dear one.
**lever**, *adv.*, rather.
**lewed**, *adj.*, ignorant, unlearned.
**leyd**, *pp.*, laid.
**leye**, *v.*, to lay.
**licour**, *n.*, moisture.
**lief**, *adj.*, dear; darling.
**lifull**, *adj.*, lifeful, vitalizing.
**liggen**, *v.*, to lie.
**lilled**, *pp.*, lolled.
**limitour**, *n.*, limitor, a friar licensed to beg for alms within a certain limit.
**limmer**, *n.*, a mistress.
**lin**, *v.*, to cease, cease from.
**linket**, *v.*, to trip or dance with activity.
**linn**, *n.*, waterfall.
**lint**, *n.*, flax.
**list**, is, are, was, were pleased; me list, him list, ye list, etc.; it pleases me, him, you, etc.
**lith**, *n.*, limb (of herself).
**Lo**, *interjection.*
**loan**, *n.*, a lane, path, a private road to a farmhouse.
**lodemenage**, *n.*, pilotage, the hire of a pilot for conducting a ship.
**loken**, *pp.*, enlocked, locked up.
**lokkes**, *n. pl.*, locks of hair.
**lond**, *n.*, land.
**long**, *adj.*, distant.
**longen**, *v.*, to long, wish.
**loof**, *n.*, the palm of the hand.
**Lordinges**, Sirs, My Masters.
**lorn**, *pp.*, lost.
**lorne**, *pp.*, lost, deserted.
**losengeour**, *n.*, flatterer.
**lough**, laugh (*v. preterit*).
**lough**, *n.*, a loch, lake.
**loun**, *n.*, a clown, rascal.
**louting**, looting (*v. pr. part.*).
**love-dayes**, *n. pl.*, days for arbitrating disputes.
**lovyere**, *n.*, lover.
**lowin'**, *adj.*, flaming.
**lowpin**, leaping (*v. pres. part.*).
**lowsed**, *pp.*, set loose.
**luce**, *n.*, luce, a pike.
**lugs**, *n. pl.*, ears.
**luntin**, *adj.*, smoking.
**lusty-hed**, *n.*, pleasure, enjoyment, gay living.
**lyart**, *adj.*, gray.
**lyte**, *adj.*, small, little.
**lyth**, lieth (*v. present*).

**mace**, *n.*, a heavy staff wholly or partly of metal and often spiked.
**maist**, *adv.*, most, almost.
**maistow**, *for*, mayest thou.
**maistres**, *n. pl.*, masters.
**male**, *n.*, bag, wallet.
**maner**, *n.*, manner, kind, sort.
**maner**, *n.*, manor, place to dwell in.
**mantelees**, *n. pl.*, mantles.
**marres**, mars (*v. present*).
**mary-bones**, *n. pl.*, marrow-bones.
**mase**, *n.*, bewildering position.
**maugree**, *prep.*, in spite of.
**maun**, must (*v. present*).
**maunciple**, *n.*, manciple, an officer who purchases victuals for an inn or college.
**mavis**, *n.*, a song thrush.
**maystou**, mayest thou.
**mede**, *n.*, mead, meadow.
**medlee**, *adj.*, of a mixed color.
**meikle**, *adj.*, much.
**melder**, *n.*, the quantity of corn sent to be ground.
**melvie**, *v.*, to dust with meal.
**mene**, *v.*, to mean, intend.
**ment**, *pp.*, mixed, mingled.
**mervaille**, *n.*, wonder.

**messin,** *n.*, a little dog, a cur.
**mete,** *n.*, meat, food.
**mete,** *v.*, to meet.
**mette,** dreamt (*v. preterit*).
**mewe,** *n.*, mew, a coop wherein fowls were fattened.
**meynee,** *n.*, household, retinue.
**minisht,** *pp.*, diminished.
**mirk,** *adj.*, dark, gloomily dark.
**mochel,** *adv.*, much.
**monie,** *adj.*, many.
**moot,** must, shall (*v. present*).
**mormal,** *n.*, sore, gangrene.
**morne,** *n.*, morning milk.
**mortreux,** *n.*, thickened soups or pottages.
**morwe (by the),** early in the morning.
**mote,** must (*v. present*).
**motlelee,** *adj.*, motley.
**moudieworts,** *n. pl.*, moles.
**mountance,** *n.*, amount, value, quantity.
**muchell,** *adj.*, great, much.
**Mulla,** the Awbeg, a stream in the Ballahoura mountains. The Awbeg empties into the Blackwater, in Spenser's day commonly called Broadwater.

**na or nae,** not.
**namo,** *adv.*, no more.
**nane,** none.
**nappy,** *n.*, strong ale.
**narwe,** *adj.*, small.
**nas,** was not.
**nayles,** *n. pl.*, nails, claws.
**ne,** *adv.*, and *conj.*, not.
**nedely,** *adv.*, of necessity, necessarily.
**needments,** *n. pl.*, things needed, necessary luggage.
**neet,** *n.*, neat, cattle.
**nekke-boon,** *n.*, neck bone.
**ner,** *adj.*, near.
**nere,** were not.
**never-a-del,** *adv.*, not a bit.
**niest,** *adj.*, next.
**nieve,** *n.*, fist.
**niffer,** *v.*, to exchange.
**nightertale,** in the night time, night after night.
**nis,** *for*, is not.
**nobles,** *n. pl.*, gold coins.
**noght,** *adv.*, not.
**nolde,** would not (*v. preterit*).
**nones, for the,** for the nonce, for the occasion.
**noot,** know not (*v. present*).
**norissing,** *adj.*, nourishing
**nose-thirles,** *n. pl.*, nostrils.
**not heed,** *n.*, head with hair cropped short.
**nousled,** *pp.*, fostered, reared.
**nouthe,** just now, at present.
**nowt,** *n.*, cattle.
**ny,** *adv.*, nigh, near.
**nye,** *v.*, to draw near.

**o, oo,** or **oon,** one.
**offring,** *n.*, offering, the act of going to the altar to present alms.
**ones,** *adv.*, once.
**ook,** *n.*, oak.
**ooth,** *n.*, oath.
**orerest,** *adj.*, outermost.
**orlogge,** *n.*, clock in a steeple.
**oule,** *n.*, owl.
**ounces,** *n. pl.*, small portions.
**ourie,** *adj.*, shivering, drooping.
**out-rydere,** *n.*, rider abroad, the name of a monk who rode to inspect granges.
**ouzell,** *n.*, blackbird.
**owches,** *n. pl.*, brooches.
**owre,** *prep.*, over.
**owsen,** *n.*, oxen.

**paas (goon a paas),** *n.*, pace, step (go at a footpace).
**pace,** *v.*, to pass.
**pacient,** *adj.*, patient.
**page,** *n.*, page (a boy).
**paidl'd,** paddled, waded (*v. pret.*).
**painch,** *n.*, paunch.
**paitrick,** *n.*, partridge.
**parbreake,** *v.*, to vomit.
**par cas,** by chance.
**pardee,** a common oath, Fr. pardieu.
**pardoner,** *n.*, pardoner, seller of indulgences.
**parfouned,** *pp.*, performed, completed.
**parfyt,** *adj.*, perfect.
**parritch,** *n.*, porridge.
**parvys,** *n.*, church-porch.
**pas,** *n.*, footpace.
**peacock-arwes,** *n. pl.*, arrows with peacock's feathers.
**pechan,** *n.*, the stomach.
**pennes,** *n. pl.*, quills.
**pens,** *n.*, penny, pence.
**perced,** *pp.*, pierced.
**pers,** *n.*, stuff of a sky-blue color.
**perced,** *pp.*, pierced.
**persaunt,** *adj.*, piercing.
**peyne,** *v.*, to take pains, endeavor.
**pight,** *pp.*, pitched, placed, hurled, struck.
**piled,** *pp.*, deprived of hair, very thin.
**pilwe-beer,** *n.*, pillow-case.
**pinche,** *v.*, to find fault with, pick a hole in.
**Pirrus,** *n.*, Pyrrhus.
**pit,** *pp.*, put.
**plaste,** *pp.*, placed.
**plat,** *adv.*, flat.
**playnd,** *pp.*, planed.
**plesen,** *v.*, to please.
**pleye,** *v.*, to play, be amused.
**pleyn,** *adj.*, full.
**poind,** *v.*, to seize, to impound.
**pokkes,** *n. pl.*, pocks, pustules.
**poortiths,** poverty's.
**poraille,** *n.*, poor people.
**port,** *n.*, carriage, behavior.
**portesse,** *n.*, a breviary.
**poudre-marchant,** *n.*, the name of a kind of a spice.
**Pouke,** Robin Goodfellow, Puck.
**pouped,** *pp.*, blew hard, puffed.
**poure,** pour, poor, power, pure.
**pouthery,** *adj.*, powdery.
**pow,** *n.*, the poll, the head.
**poynaunt,** *adj.*, pungent.
**poyson,** *n.*, poison.
**practisour,** *n.*, practitioner.
**predicacioun,** *n.*, preaching, sermon.
**prees,** *n.*, the press, the crowd.
**presse,** *n.*, mould.
**pricasour,** *n.*, a hard rider.
**priefe,** *n.*, trial, examination, demonstration, efficacy.
**priketh,** incites, excites (*v. present*).
**privee,** *adj.*, secret.
**prively,** *adv.*, secretly.
**prow,** *n.*, profit, advantage.
**pryme,** *n.*, prime (of day) usually 9 A.M.
**prys,** *n.*, price, value.
**puissant,** *adj.*, powerful.
**pulled hen,** a plucked hen.
**purtreye,** *v.*, to draw.
**pyned,** *pp.*, examined by torture.

**quad,** *adj.*, bad.
**quelle,** *v.*, to kill.
**quod,** quoth (*v. preterit*).
**quyte you,** repay you.

**rablement,** *n.*, disturbance, tumult.
**raibles,** *n. pl.*, gabbles.
**rairin,** *adj.*, roaring.
**ram,** *n.*, ram (as a prize at wrestling).
**ranckes,** proud, forward.
**rash-buss,** *n.*, a clump of rushes.
**raskall,** *adj.*, of the rabble, vulgar, base.
**raught,** *pp.*, reached (out or forward).
**ravisedest,** didst draw (down).
**ream,** *n.*, foam.

**recche**, interpret, expound (*v. present*).
**recure**, *v.*, to repair.
**redoubled**, *pp.*, re-echoed.
**reed**, *adj.*, red.
**reekit**, *adj.*, smoky.
**reestit**, *pp.*, singed.
**reft**, took away (*v. preterit*).
**reherce**, *v.*, to rehearse, repeat.
**rekke**, *n.*, care.
**remenant**, *n.*, remainder, rest.
**remes**, *n. pl.*, realms.
**rennen**, *v.*, to run.
**rent**, *v.*, to rend, hurl.
**rente**, *n.*, revenue, income.
**repleccioun**, *n.*, repletion.
**repleet**, *adj.*, repleet, full.
**repreve**, *n.*, shame.
**resoun**, *n.*, reason, right.
**rethor**, *n.*, orator.
**reule**, *n.*, rule.
**reve**, *n.*, reeve, steward, bailiff.
**revers**, *n.*, reverse, contrary.
**reweth**, makes me sorry, I am sorry (*v. present*).
**reyn**, *n.*, rain.
**reysed**, *pp.*, gone on a military expedition.
**rigwoodie**, *adj.*, ancient, lean.
**rin**, *v.*, to run.
**rives**, splits, cleaves, rends, tears (*v. present*).
**robuckes**, the male or any roe deer.
**roghte**, recked, cared, regarded (*v. preterit*).
**rood**, rode (*v. preterit*).
**roos**, *pp.*, rose.
**rote**, *n.*, root.
**rote**, by heart.
**rote**, *n.*, a kind of fiddle, of Celtic origin.
**rouncy**, *n.*, a hackney, a nag.
**rowme**, *n.*, room.
**rowtin**, *adj.*, bellowing.
**royalliche**, *adv.*, royally.
**rozet**, *n.*, rosin.
**ruddock**, *n.*, redbreast.
**rudeliche**, *adv.*, rudely.
**runkl'd**, *pp.*, wrinkled.
**ruste**, *v.*, to rust.
**ryve**, *v.*, to pierce.

**sae**, *adv.*, so.
**saffron with**, to tinge with (colour) saffron.
**sair**, *adj.*, sore.
**salue**, *v.*, (Ger.) to greet.
**sam**, *adv.*, together.
**sang**, *n.*, song.
**sangwin**, *adj.*, blood-red.
**sark**, *n.*, shirt, shift.
**saugh**, saw (*v. preterit*).
**sautrye**, *n.*, psaltery, a kind of harp (8 strings).
**sawcefleem**, *adj.*, covered with pimples (due to an excess of humour called salsa phlegma).
**say**, *n.*, proof, quality.
**sayle**, *v.*, to sail.
**scalled**, *pp.*, scaly, scabby.
**scathe**, *n.*, scathe, harm, "a pity."
**scaul**, *v.*, to scold.
**scaur**, *adj.*, scary, timid.
**scole**, *n.*, school.
**scoleye**, *v.*, (Ger.) to attend school, to study.
**scowre**, *v.*, to scour.
**screed**, *n.*, a rip, rent.
**secree**, *adj.*, secret.
**seely**, *adj.*, simple, harmless, helpless, poor.
**seigh**, saw (*v. preterit*).
**seith**, says (*v. present*).
**seke**, *v.*, to search, seek.
**seke**, *adj.*, sick, ill.
**sely**, *adj.*, good, happy.
**seminge**, as it appears to me.
**seson**, *n.*, season.
**sethe**, *v.*, to seethe, boil.
**seuretee**, *n.*, surety.
**seyl**, *n.*, sail.
**seyn**, *pp.*, seen.
**shamfastnesse**, *n.*, modesty.
**shaply**, *adv.*, shapely, fit.
**shaumes**, *n. pl.*, legs, limbs.
**shaw**, *n.*, wood.
**sheef**, *n.*, sheaf.
**sheeldes**, *n. pl.*, shields.
**shend**, *v.*, to disgrace.
**shent**, *pp.*, scolded.
**sherte**, *n.*, shirt.
**sheugh**, *n.*, a ditch, furrow.
**shire**, *n.*, shire.
**shirreve**, *n.*, sheriff.
**shiten**, *adj.*, dirty, defiled.
**sho**, *n.*, shoe.
**shog**, *n.*, a shake.
**sholder-boon**, *n.*, shoulder blade bone.
**shoof**, shoved, pushed (*v. preterit*).
**shoon**, *n. pl.*, shoes.
**shoures**, *n. pl.*, showers.
**shrewe**, beshrew, curse.
**shriech**, *n.*, screech.
**shrighte**, *pp.*, shrieked.
**shul**, shall.
**shund**, *v.*, to avoid, escape from, eschew.
**sic**, such.
**sikerer**, *adj.*, surer, more to be trusted.
**sikerly**, *adv.*, certainly, surely, truly.
**siller**, *n.*, silver, money in general.
**sin, sith**, or **sithens**, *conj.* and *adv.*, since.
**skellum**, *n.*, a good for nothing.
**skelpin**, *adj.*, hastening, moving quickly.
**skirl**, *v.*, to cry out shrilly.
**sklentin**, *adj.*, slanting, squinting.
**slaes**, *n.*, sloes.
**slaps**, *n.*, a breach in the fence, an opening.
**slee** or **sleen**, *v.*, to slay.
**sleekit**, *adj.*, sleek.
**sleeth**, slays (*v. present*).
**sleighte**, *n.*, cunning.
**slough**, *n.*, slough, mire.
**smeddum**, *n.*, powder.
**smerte**, *adv.*, smartly, sharply.
**smiddie**, *n.*, smithy.
**smoored**, *pp.*, smothered.
**smyrtie**, *n.*, litter.
**snash**, *n.*, abuse.
**sneeshin-mill**, *n.*, snuffbox.
**snell**, *adj.*, bitter, biting.
**snewed**, abounded (*v. preterit*).
**snibben**, *pp.*, snubbed, reproved.
**snowkit**, *pp.*, snuffed.
**snubbes**, *n.*, snags.
**solas**, *n.*, amusement.
**som-del**, *adv.*, somewhat.
**somer**, *n.*, summer.
**Somers-heat**, Somerset.
**somnour**, *n.*, summoner, an officer who summoned delinquents before the ecclesiastical courts.
**sond**, *n.*, sand.
**sonsie**, *adj.*, pleasant, good-natured, jolly.
**sooth**, *n.*, truth, *adj.*, true, as *adv.*, truly.
**soothly**, *adv.*, truly.
**sooty**, *adj.*, begrimed with soot.
**sop**, *n.*, sop (of toasted bread), sop in wyn.
**soper**, *n.*, supper.
**sore**, *adv.*, sorely.
**sote**, *adv.*, sweetly.
**sothe**, *n.*, truth.
**souce**, souse.
**souded**, *pp.*, confirmed.
**soukinge**, sucking (*v. pres. partc.*).
**soule**, *n.*, soul.
**souninge in**, tending to.
**sowne**, *v.*, to sound.
**sowther**, *v.*, to solder.
**spairges**, *n. pl.*, splashes.
**sparwe**, *n.*, sparrow.
**spean**, *v.*, to wean (by disgust).
**sped**, *v.*, to prosper.
**spiers**, asks (*v. present*).
**splore**, *n.*, frolic, a carousal.
**spones**, *n. pl.*, spoons.
**spores**, *n. pl.*, spurs.
**sporne**, *v.*, to spurn.
**sprattle**, *v.*, to sprawl, scramble.

**spright**, *n.*, the mind, breath, spirit.
**spunkies**, *n. pl.*, spirits, will o' wisps.
**spyced**, *pp.*, scrupulous.
**stacher**, *v.*, to stagger, totter.
**stal**, *pp.*, secretly retreated; also stole, stolen.
**stampe**, stamp, bray in a mortar (*v. present*).
**stane**, *n.*, stone.
**staw**, stole (*v. preterit*).
**stechin**, cramming, filling (*v. pres. partc.*).
**steeks**, *n. pl.*, stitches.
**stemed**, shone, glowed (*v. preterit*).
**stents**, *n. pl.*, assessments, dues, taxes.
**stepe**, *adj.*, glittering, bright.
**sterlinges**, *n. pl.*, sterling coins.
**sterres**, *n.*, stars.
**sterve**, *v.*, to die.
**stevene**, *n.*, voice, sound, language.
**stibble**, *n.*, stubble.
**stiked (swyn)**, a stuck pig.
**stones**, *n. pl.*, precious stones.
**stoor**, *n.*, store stock (of a farm).
**stope**, *pp.*, advanced.
**stot**, *n.*, stallion, horse, cob.
**stoure**, *n.*, dust, conflict, strife.
**stownd**, *pp.*, stunned.
**stowre**, *n.*, turmoil, strife; a combat; distress, misfortune.
**streit**, *adj.*, narrow.
**streyneth**, constrains (*v. present*).
**strike**, *n.*, hank (of flax), a handful that may be heckled at once.
**strondes**, *n. pl.*, shores.
**strowd**, *pp.*, strewn.
**sturre**, *v.*, to steer, guide.
**sturt**, *n.*, worry, trouble.
**substilly**, *adv.*, craftily.
**suffisaunce**, *n.*, sufficiency.
**sugh**, *n.*, a sigh; a moan of the wind.
**superfluitee**, *n.*, superfluity, excess.
**surcote**, *n.*, topcoat, overcoat.
**sustres**, *n. pl.*, sisters.
**swal**, was puffed up with anger.
**swankies**, *n. pl.*, strapping fellows.
**swatch**, *n.*, a sample.
**swats**, *n.*, new ale.
**swevene**, *n.*, dream.
**swich**, *adj.*, such.
**swinken**, *v.*, (Ger.) to toil, labour.
**swote**, *adj.*, sweet.
**swowning**, swooning (*v. pres. partc.*).
**swythe**, *adv.*, quickly.
**syne**, *adv.* and *conj.*, since, then, ago.
**sythes**, *n. pl.*, times.

**tabard**, *n.*, a ploughman's loose frock.
**taille**, *n.*, tally, an account scored with notched sticks.
**takel**, *n.*, tackle, gear, arrows.
**talants**, *n. pl.*, talons.
**talen**, *v.* (Ger.) to tell tales.
**tapicer**, *n.*, upholsterer, maker of carpets.
**tappestere**, *n.*, female tapster, barmaid.
**targe**, *n.*, target, shield.
**tassoille**, *for*, to assoille, i.e. to absolve.
**tawted**, *pp*, matted, with matted hair.
**tead**, *n.*, a torch.
**tempest thee noght**, do not violently distress thyself.
**tentie**, *adj.*, watchful, careful, heedful.
**terciane**, *adj.*, tertian.
**texpounden**, *v.*, to expound, explain.
**thack**, *n.*, thatch.
**thack and rape**, the covering of a house; hence, the "home necessities."
**thae**, *pron.*, those.
**thalighte**, for thee alighte (in thee alighte) alighted in thee.
**thanne**, *adv.*, then.
**tharray**, *for*, the array.
**theech (so)**, *for*, so thee ich, as I may thrive, as I hope to prosper.
**thegither**, *adv.*, together.
**thencrees**, *for*, the increase.
**thestat**, *for*, the state (or condition).
**thewes**, *n. pl.*, manners, behavior, mental and moral qualities.
**thole**, *v.*, to endure, suffer.
**thrang**, *n.*, throng.
**thrave**, 24 sheaves of corn.
**thilke**, that.
**tho**, *pron.*, those.
**thowes**, *n. pl.*, thaws.
**thrall**, *n.*, slave, slavery.
**thridle**, *n.*, third.
**thrillant**, *adj.*, piercing, keen.
**thritty**, *adj.*, thirty.
**thryes**, *adv.*, thrice.
**thurgh**, *prep.*, by means of.
**tikelnesse**, *n.*, instability, lack of steadiness.
**timmer**, *n.*, timber.
**tint**, *adj.*, lost.
**tipet**, *n.*, tippet, cape.
**tiptoon**, *n. pl.* tiptoes.
**tirlin**, *adj.*, stripping, uncovering, unroofing.
**tither**, the other.
**Tithones**, son of Laomedon, the king of Troy, mortal favorite of Aurora.
**togidre**, *adv.*, together.
**tombesteres**, *n. pl.*, female dancers, literally female tumblers.
**toon**, *n. pl.*, toes.
**tord**, *n.*, piece of dung.
**torn**, *n.*, turn.
**toste**, *n.*, toast.
**to-tere**, *v.*, to rend in pieces.
**totten**, *v.*, to take toll.
**tousie**, *adj.*, shaggy.
**tow**, *n.*, flax, rope.
**towmond**, *n.*, a twelvemonth.
**towre**, a term of falconry; to soar in a spiral; here applied to deer far up on the mountain.
**towres** (those bricky towres), the Temple. Formerly the abode of the Knights Templar; after the dissolution of their order, granted to the Knights of St. John, and by them leased to the students of Common Law, who have remained there ever since.
**trad**, *pp.*, treaded, copulated.
**traynes**, *n. pl.*, the tails; guile, artifice; a draw-net.
**traytours**, *n. pl.*, traitors.
**treen**, *n. pl.*, trees.
**trete**, *v.*, to treat.
**tretys**, *adj.*, well proportioned, long.
**trompe**, *n.*, trumpet.
**trouthe**, *n.*, troth.
**trowe**, *v.*, to believe.
**tukked**, *pp.*, tucked.
**twalpennie**, *n.*, a penny.
**twalpint**, 12 pint.
**twa** or **tweye**, *adj.*, two.
**twinne**, *v.*, to sever, part.
**tyke**, *n.*, a dog.
**tythes**, *n. pl.*, tithes.

**unbrent**, *pp.*, unburnt.
**unco**, *adj.*, strange, remarkable, uncommon.
**unco guid**, the rigidly righteous.
**uncrudded**, *pp.*, uncurdled.
**undern**, *n.*, a particular time in the morning is here implied, about 9 A.M. or later.
**unkend**, *pp.*, unknown.
**unlich**, *adv.*, unlike.
**unnethes**, *adv.*, scarcely, hardly, with difficulty.

**unweeting**, *adj.*, ignorant, unconscious, by accident.
**usquabae**, *n.*, whisky.

**vache**, *n.*, cow, beast.
**variable**, *adj.*, various.
**vavasour**, *n.*, a subvassal (next in dignity to a baron).
**vernicle**, *n.*, vernicle.
**veyl**, *n.*, veil.
**vigilgës**, *n.*, vigils, evening meetings.
**vitaille**, *n.*, victuals.
**voys**, *n.*, voice.

**wabster**, *n.*, weaver.
**wad**, would, would have (*v. present*).
**wae**, *adj.*, woeful, sorrowful (sometimes used sarcastically).
**Waesucks**, *interj.*, Alas!
**wal**, *n.*, wall.
**walet**, *n.*, wallet.
**wan**, won, gained (*v. preterit*).
**war or ware**, *adj.*, prudent, discreet.
**wark**, *n.*, work.
**wark-lume**, *n.*, a tool, a loom.
**warlocks**, *n. pl.*, wizards.
**waryce**, *v.*, to heal, cure.
**wa's**, *n. pl.*, walls.
**wast**, *n.*, waste.
**wastel-breed**, *n.*, cake, bread, bread of the best quality.
**waught**, *n.*, deep draught.
**wawlie**, *adj.*, ample, large, robust.
**wayk**, *adj.*, weak.
**wayne**, *a.*, vain; *n.*, vein.
**weans**, *n.*, a child.
**webbe**, *n.*, a weaver.
**weel-gaun**, *adj.*, well-going.
**weel-hained**, *adj.*, well saved.
**weet**, *v.*, to wet.
**wele**, *n.*, happiness, fortune.
**welke**, *v.*, to fade.
**welked**, *pp.*, withered.
**welle**, *n.*, well, source, spring.
**wende**, would have thought.
**wenen**, *v.*, to ween, suppose.
**weneth**, imagines (*v. present*).
**werre**, *n.*, war.
**werte**, *n.*, wart.
**weyeden**, *pp.*, weighed.
**weyes**, *n. pl.*, ways.
**Weylaway**, *interj.*, Alas!
**wha**, *pron.*, who.
**whaily**, *adj.*, discolored (as in wall eyes).
**whalpit**, *pp.*, whelped.
**whang**, *n.*, a large slice.
**wheep**, *n.*, small beer.
**whelkes**, *n. pl.*, pimples, blotches.
**whelpe**, *n.*, puppy, cub.
**whilom**, *adv.*, once on a time, formerly.
**whott**, *adj.*, hot.
**whyleare**, sometime ago or before, lately.
**whyles**, sometimes, now and then.
**whyt**, *adj.*, white.
**wimpel**, *n.*, wimpel, covering for the head, gathered around it, and pleated under the chin.
**widwe**, *n.*, widow.
**wight**, *n.*, person, creature, man.
**wike**, *n.*, week.
**wikke**, *adj.*, wicked.
**winnocks**, *n. pl.*, windows.
**wiste**, knew (*v. preterit*).
**witing**, *n.*, knowledge, cognizance.
**wize**, *adj.*, wise, way.
**wlatsom**, *adj.*, disgusting, heinous.
**wo**, *adj.*, sad, grieved.
**wol**, will (*v. present*).
**wolden**, would wish (*v. present*).
**woldestow**, *for*, would'st you.
**woll**, *a.*, well, *n.*, wool.
**wolle**, *n.*, wool.
**wone**, *n.*, custom, usage.
**woning**, dwelling (*v. pres. partc.*).
**wonner**, a wonder, marvel (sometimes used contemptuously).
**woodnesse**, *n.*, madness, rage.
**woot**, (I), I know (*v. present*).
**wortes**, *n. pl.*, herbs.
**wrack**, *n.*, violence; *v.*, to wreck.
**wreke**, *v.*, to wreak, avenge.
**wyf**, *n.*, wife.
**wyliecoat**, *n.*, undervest.
**wyn**, *n.*, wine.

**yaf**, gavest (*v. present*).
**y-bore**, *pp.*, borne, carried.
**y-boren**, *pp.*, born.
**y-chaped**, *pp.*, furnished with chapes or metal caps (placed at the end of the sheath).
**y-corven**, *pp.*, cut.
**ydel**, *adj.*, idle.
**ydrad**, *pp.*, dreaded.
**y-drawe**, *pp.*, drawn.
**yeddinges**, *n. pl.*, songs.
**yede**, *v.*, to go.
**yeldhalle**, *n.*, guild-hall.
**yell's**, *adj.*, dry, milkless.
**yelwe**, *adj.*, yellow.
**yeman**, *n.*, yeoman.
**yemanly**, *adv.*, in a yeomanlike manner.
**yën**, *n. pl.*, eyes.
**yerde**, *n.*, switch.
**yerne**, error for **erme**, *v.*, to feel sad, grieve.
**yfed**, *pp.*, fed.
**yill-caup**, *n.*, a wooden drinking vessel.
**y-knowe**, *pp.*, known.
**y-led**, *pp.*, guided, conducted.
**y-logged**, *pp.*, lodged.
**y-nogh**, enough.
**yod**, *pp.*, gone.
**yont**, *adv.*, beyond.
**yplaste**, *pp.*, placed.
**y-preved**, *pp.*, proved (to be).
**y-sprad**, *pp.*, spread.
**yts**, *pron.*, its.
**yve**, *n.*, ivy.
**yvel**, *adj.*, evil.
**y-wis**, *adv.*, certainly, truly, verily.
**y-write**, *pp.*, written.

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES


A barking sound the Shepherd hears, 338.
Ae fond kiss, then we sever! 296.
A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine, 22.
A glorious people vibrated again . . . 536.
Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight, 568.
A little mushroom table spread, 122.
All human things are subject to decay, 180.
All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair, 382.
All that I know, 773.
All thoughts, all passions, all delights, 367.
Almost at the root, 353.
Among these latter busts we count by scores, 777.
And is this — Yarrow? — *This* the Stream, 354.
And the first gray of morning filled the east, 584.
And thou art dead, as young and fair, 450.
A povre widwe, somdel stope in age, 14.
A rose-bud, by my early walk, 294.
A simple Child, 303.
As Julia once a-slumbering lay, 120.
A slumber did my spirit seal, 309.
As one who hangs down-bending from the side, 319.
As thro' the land at eve we went, 627.
A sweet disorder in the dress, 119.
As when a ship, that flyes fayre under sayle, 55.
A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, 546.
At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time, 832.
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea, 498.
Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones, 136.
A wanderer is man from his birth, 602.
Ay me! how many perils doe enfold, 69.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth, 560.
Behold her, single in the field, 335.
Behold! I see the haven nigh at hand, 101.
Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed, 334.
Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington, 318.
Bid me to live, and I will live, 121.
Blow, blow, thou winter wind, 115.
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away! 760.
Break, break, break, 626.
Breathes there the man, with soul so dead, 385.
Bright Flower! whose home is everywhere, 334.
Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art! 580.
Bright tulips, we do know, 123.
Bury the Great Duke, 666.
But anxious cares the pensive nymph opprest, 215.
But do not let us quarrel any more, 787.
By this the northerne wagoner had set, 29.

Calme was the day, and through the trembling ayre, 112.
Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flowers, 212.
Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars, 340.
Coldly, sadly descends, 612.
Come, dear children, let us away, 596.
Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height, 628.
Come into the garden, Maud, 664.
Come unto these yellow sands, 115.
Comin thro' the rye, poor body, 298.
'Courage!' he said, and pointed toward the land, 622.
Creep into thy narrow bed, 599.
Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud, 136.
Cupid, as he lay among, 119.
Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear, 137.

Daughter of Jove, relentless Power, 247.
Day! Faster and more fast, 751.
Dear, though to part it be a hell, 119.
Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars, 187.
Duncan Gray cam here to woo, 299.

Earth has not anything to show more fair. 332.
Earth, Ocean, Air, belovèd brotherhood! 508.
Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable, 699.
Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind! 470.
Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky! 355.
Ever let the Fancy roam, 559.

Fair as the earliest beam of eastern light, 400.
Fair daffodils, we weep to see, 122.

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree, 123.
Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up, 313.
Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west, 332.
Fare thee well! and if for ever, 451.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North, 295.
Fear death? — to feel the fog in my throat, 797.
First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock! 825.
Five years have past; five summers, with the length, 305.
Flee fro the prees, and dwelle with sothfastnesse, 1.
Flower in the crannied wall, 626.
For auld lang syne, my dear, 298.
From harmony, from heav'nly harmony, 196.
From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done, 719.
From Stirling castle we have seen, 336.
Full fathom five thy father lies, 116.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, 121.
Get up, get up for shame, the blooming morn, 120.
Goethe in Weimar sleeps; and Greece, 611.
Go, fetch to me a pint o' wine, 294.
Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill, 603.
Go thou forth, my book, though late, 124.
Grow old along with me! 790.

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare, 764.
Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! 535.
Happy the man whose wish and care, 205.
Hark! ah, the nightingale, 598.
Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven's gate sings, 115.
Harp of the North! that mouldering long hast hung, 392.
Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star, 377.
Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie? 287.
Hence, loathèd Melancholy, 130.
Hence, vain deluding Joys, 132.
Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee, 124.
High in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate, 345.
High on a throne of royal state, which far, 149.
High time now gan it wex for Una fayre, 93.
Home they brought her warrior dead, 627.
'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-more of this,' 13.
How changed is here each spot man makes or fills! 608.
How sleep the brave, who sink to rest, 238.

I am just seventeen years and five months old, 798.
I am monarch of all I survey, 262.
I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave! 781.
I and Clive were friends — and why not? 827.
I arise from dreams of thee, 533.
I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers, 534.
I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way, 541.
If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song, 241.
I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden, 541.
If from the public way you turn your steps, 324.
If this great world of joy and pain, 357.
I held it truth, with him who sings, 629.
I met a traveller from an antique land, 528.
In one of those excursions may they ne'er, 322.
In the deserted, moon-blanched street, 600.
In the hour of my distress, 124.
In these deep solitudes and awful cells, 220.
In these gay thoughts the Loves and Graces shine, 205.
In this lone, open glade I lie, 602.
In vain to me the smiling mornings shine, 248.
In Xanadu did Kubla Khan, 377.
I said — Then, dearest, since 't is so, 776.
I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers, 119.
I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he, 761.
Is there for honest poverty, 300.
Is this a fast, to keep, 126.
Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child, 414.
It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, 332.
It is an ancient Mariner, 358.
"It is not to be thought of that the Flood," 334.
It little profits that an idle king, 624.
I travelled among unknown men, 309.
It seems a day, 307.
It was a dreary morning when the wheels, 316.
I wandered lonely as a cloud, 337.
I weep for Adonais — he is dead! 518.

Just for a handful of silver he left us, 760.
John Anderson my jo, John, 295.
John Gilpin was a citizen, 273.

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King, 759.

King Charles, and who'll do him right now? 760.
Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle, 456.

Leodogran, the king of Cameliard, 670.
Let me not to the marriage of true minds, 118.
Light flows our war of mocking words; and yet, 601.
Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore, 117.
Live, live with me, and thou shalt see, 123.
Lo! I the man, whose Muse whylome did maske, 21.
Lord, Thou hast given me a cell, 125.

Maid of Athens, ere we part, 449.
Many a green isle needs must be, 528.
Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour, 333.
Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold, 544.
Music, when soft voices die, 542.
My hair is grey, but not with years, 470.
My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains, 568.
My heart leaps up when I behold, 330.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here, 295.
My lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend! 282.
My seventeenth year was come, 315.
My sister! my sweet sister! if a name, 452.
My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot, 347.

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-west died away, 766.
No cloud, no relique of the sunken day, 368.
No longer mourn for me when I am dead, 118.
Not marble, nor the gilded monuments, 117.
Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain, 210.
Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollow-nesse, 35.
Now the golden morn aloft, 248.
Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns, 287.
Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room, 340.

O blithe New-comer! I have heard, 336.
O, Brignall banks are wild and fair, 412.
Of all the cities in Romanian lands, 199.
Of a' the airts the wind can blaw, 295.
Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit, 138.
O Friend! I know not which way I must look, 333.
Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray, 310.
Oh goodly golden chayne! wherewith yfere, 76.
O Rome, my country! city of the soul! 432.
Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom, 455.
Oh, to be in England, 765.
O, Jenny's a' weet, poor body, 298.
O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous, 10.
O loyal to the royal in thyself, 749.
O Mary, at thy window be! 301.
O mistress mine, where are you roaming? 115.
O, my luve is like a red, red rose, 298.
Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee, 333.
On either side the river lie, 617.
One word is too often profaned, 542.
On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two, 823.
O, saw ye bonie Lesley, 299.
O that those lips had language! Life has passed, 276.
O that 't were possible, 665.
O thou by Nature taught, 238.
O Thou that in the Heavens does dwell, 293.
O thou, the wonder of all days! 125.
O thou! whatever title suit thee, 281.
O thou who bad'st thy turtles bear, 242.
O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, 532.
O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut, 296.
O world! O life! O time! 543.
O ye, wha are sae guid yoursel, 288.

Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat, 732.

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow, 249.
Rough wind, that moanest loud, 543.
Rousseau, Voltaire, our Gibbon, and De Staël, 470.
Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak," 766.
Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned, 356.
Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled, 299.
Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, 579.
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? 116.
Shapcot! to thee the fairy state, 122.
She dwelt among the untrodden ways, 309.
She said: the pitying audience melt in tears, 217.
She should never have looked at me, 762.
She walks in beauty, like the night, 455.
"She was a Phantom of delight," 337.
Should auld acquaintance be forgot, 298.
Shut not so soon; the dull-ey'd night, 122.

'Shut, shut the door, good John!' fatigued I said, 225.
Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea, 117.
Som tyme this world was so stedfast and stable, 1.
Souls of Poets dead and gone, 544.
St. Agnes' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was! 560.
Stern Daughter of the Voice of God! 338.
Stop, Christian passer-by! — Stop, child of God, 383.
Strange fits of passion have I known, 308.
Strew on her roses, roses, 581.
Strong Son of God, immortal Love, 629.
Sunset and evening star, 750.
Sweet and low, sweet and low, 627.
Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain, 256.
Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes, 119.
Swiftly walk o'er the western wave, 542.

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean, 627.
Tell me where is fancy bred, 115.
That second time they hunted me, 774.
That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, 773.
That story which the bold Sir Bedivere, 742.
That time of year thou mayst in me behold, 118.
The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, 456.
The Chieftain reared his form on high, 409.
The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, 245.
The Deil's awa, the Deil's awa, 297.
The Deil cam fiddlin thro' the town, 297.
The fountains mingle with the river, 534.
The Frost performs its secret ministry, 379.
The gallant Youth, who may have gained, 356.
The gloomy night is gath'ring fast, 290.
The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece! 496.
The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent, 677.
The lovely lass of Inverness, 297.
The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought, 48.
The Poet's soul was with me at that time, 320.
The poplars are fell'd; farewell to the shade, 278.
There be none of Beauty's daughters, 451.
There is sweet music here that softer falls, 623.
There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier, 618.
There's a palace in Florence, the world knows well, 778.
There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away, 450.
There's not a nook within this solemn Pass, 357.
There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs, 307.
There was a lass, and she was fair! 301.
There was a roaring in the wind all night, 330.
There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, 342.
There was in Asie, in a greet citee, 11.
The sea is calm to-night, 598.
These to His Memory — since he held them dear, 669.
The sky is overcast, 303.
The splendor falls on castle walls, 627.
The sun is warm, the sky is clear, 532.
The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill, 413.
The twentieth year is well-nigh past, 279.
The way was long, the wind was cold, 384.
The woods decay, the woods decay and fall, 625.
The world is too much with us; late and soon, 341.
This is the month, and this the happy morn, 127.
Though the day of my destiny's over, 452.
Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray, 296.
Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, 567.
Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies, 193.
Three years she grew in sun and shower, 309.
Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused, 614.
Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry, 117.
'T is known, at least it should be, that throughout, 484.
'T is morning; and the sun with ruddy orb, 262.
'T is the middle of night by the castle clock, 370.
Titan! to whose immortal eyes, 483.
To die be given us, or attain! 581.
To fair Fidele's grassy tomb, 243.
Toll for the brave! 278.
To me, fair friend, you never can be old, 118.
To one who has been long in city pent, 544.
T' our tale. — The feast was over, the slaves gone, 498.
Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men! 333.
'Twas at the royal feast, for Pérsia won, 196.
'Twas on a lofty vase's side, 244.

Under the greenwood tree, 115.
Upon a time, before the faery broods, 570.
Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books, 304.

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying, 382.

Waken, lords and ladies gay, 412.
We are na fou, we're nae that fou, 296.

We cannot kindle when we will, 599.
Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r, 286.
Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie, 285.
Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made, 380.
'Wel seyd, by *corpus dominus*,' quod our hoste, 10.
Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote, 2.
What beck'ning ghost along the moonlight shade, 206.
What dire offence from am'rous causes springs, 209.
What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might, 84.
What man so wise, what earthly witt so ware, 62.
What, you are stepping westward? — Yea, 335.
Whenas in silks my Julia goes, 124.
When biting Boreas, fell and doure, 289.
Whence is it that, amazed, I hear, 279.
When chapman billies leave the street, 290.
When coldness wraps this suffering clay, 455.
When I behold a forest spread, 124.
When I consider how my light is spent, 137.
When I have borne in memory what has tamed, 334.
When I have fears that I may cease to be, 544.
When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced, 117.
When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes, 116.
When in the chronicle of wasted time, 118.
When lovely woman stoops to folly, 261.
When Music, heav'nly maid, was young, 242.
When Ruth was left half desolate, 310.
When the lamp is shattered, 543.
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought, 116.
When we two parted, 449.
Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go, 341.
Where the bee sucks, there suck I, 116.
Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles, 763.
While, lost to all his former mirth, 240.
While you, great Patron of Mankind! sustain, 231.
Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he, 339.
'Whom the gods love die young,' was said of yore, 499.
Who shall awake the Spartan fife, 239.
Why I tie about thy wrist, 122.
Why weep ye by the tide, ladie? 413.
Why, William, on that cold grey stone, 304.
'Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best, 793.

Ye banks and braes and streams around, 300.
Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon, 297.
Ye distant spires, ye antique towers, 244.
Ye have been fresh and green, 121.
Ye learned sisters, which have oftentimes, 107.
Ye may simper, blush and smile, 121.
Yet are they here the same unbroken knot, 344.
Yet deem not, Friend! that human kind with me, 322.
Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more, 133.
Yet still in me with those soft luxuries, 320.
You know, we French stormed Ratisbon, 773.
Young knight what ever, that dost armes professe, 41.

# INDEX OF AUTHORS AND TITLES


Address to the Deil, 281.
Address to the Unco Guid, 288.
A Dirge, 543.
Adonais, 518.
Ae Fond Kiss, 296.
A Lament, 543.
Alastor, 508.
Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music, 196.
Ancient Mariner, The, 358.
Andrea del Sarto, 787.
And thou art dead, as young and fair, 450.
A Night-Piece, 303.
A Red, Red Rose, 298.
Arnold, Introd., xiv; Poems, 581–616; Biog., 888–890.
A Rose-Bud, by my Early Walk, 294.
Art above Nature, 124.
"A slumber did my spirit seal," 309.
A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 196.
"As thro' the land at eve we went," 627.
A Summer Night, 600.
A Thanksgiving to God for His House, 125.
Auld Lang Syne, 298.
A Winter Night, 289.

Beppo, 484.
"Blow, blow, thou winter wind," 115.
Boot and Saddle, 760.
"Break, break, break," 626.
Bride of Abydos, The, 456.
Browning, Introd., xiv–xv; Poems, 751–832; Biog., 893–896.
Buried Life, The, 601.
Burns, Introd., xi; Poems, 281–302; Biog., 867–870.
Byron, Introd., xii–xiii; Poems, 414–507; Biog., 879–882.

Caliban upon Setebos, 793.
Canterbury Tales, Prologue, 2.
Cavalier Tunes, 759.
Character of the Happy Warrior, 339.
Chaucer, Introd., iii–iv; Poems, 1–20; Biog., 835–837.
Childe Harold, 414.
Christabel, 370.
Clive, 827.
Coleridge, Introd., xi–xii; Poems, 358–383; Biog., 874–877.
Collins, Introd., ix; Poems, 238–243; Biog., 856–858.
"Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height," 628.
"Come into the garden, Maud," 664.
"Come unto these yellow sands," 115.
Coming of Arthur, 670.
Comin' Thro' the Rye, 298.
Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais, August, 1802, 332.
Composed by the side of Grasmere Lake, 340.
Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802, 332.
Corinna's Going A-Maying, 120.
Cotter's Saturday Night, The, 282.
Cowper, Introd., x; Poems, 262–280; Biog., 865–867.
Cristina, 762.
Crossing the Bar, 750.

Dedication to Idylls of the King, 669.
Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman, The, 297.
Dejection: an Ode, 380.
Delight in Disorder, 119.
Destruction of Sennacherib, The, 456.
Dirge of Jephthah's Daughter, The, 125.
Dirge in Cymbeline, 243.
Don Juan, 496.
Dover Beach, 598.
Dryden, Introd., viii; Poems, 180–204; Biog., 850–853.
Duncan Gray, 299.

Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady, 206.
Elegy written in a Country Churchyard, 245.
Eloisa to Abelard, 220.
Endymion. Book I, 545.
Epilogue ("At the midnight"), 832.
Epistle to Augusta ("My sister! my sweet sister!"), 452.
Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, being the Prologue to the Satires, 225.
Epistle to Mrs. Blount, with the works of Voiture, 205.
Epitaph (Nov. 1833), 383.

Epithalamion, 107.
Eve of St. Agnes, The, 560.
Expostulation and Reply, 304.

Faerie Queene. Book I, 21.
Fancy, 559.
"Fare thee well," 451.
Fidelity, 338.
First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace, The, 231.
"Flower in the crannied wall," 626.
Forsaken Merman, The, 596.
Fra Lippo Lippi, 781.
Frost at Midnight, 379.
"Full fathom five thy father lies," 116.

Gareth and Lynette, 677.
Gipsies, 344.
Give a Rouse, 760.
GOLDSMITH, Introd., ix; Poems, 249–261; Biog., 861–864.
GRAY, Introd., ix; Poems, 244–248; Biog., 858–861.
Green Linnet, The, 334.
Guinevere, 732.

"Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven's gate sings," 115.
HERRICK, Introd., vii; Poems, 119–126; Biog., 843–846.
Hervé Riel, 823.
Highland Mary, 300.
His Litany to the Holy Spirit, 124.
Holy Grail, The, 719.
Holy Willie's Prayer, 293.
"Home they brought her warrior dead," 627.
Home-Thoughts, from Abroad, 765.
Home-Thoughts, from the Sea, 766.
How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix, 761.
Hunting Song. "Waken, Lords and ladies gay," 412.
Hymn before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni, 377.
Hymn on the morning of Christ's Nativity, 127.

Idylls of the King, 669.
"If this great world of joy and pain," 357.
Il Penseroso, 132.
Incident of the French Camp, 773.
Indian Serenade, The, 533.
In London, September, 1802 ("O Friend! I know not which way I must look"), 333.
In Memoriam, A. H. H., 628.
Is there for Honest Poverty, 300.
Italian in England, The, 774.
"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free," 332.
It is not to be thought of that the Flood, 334.
"I travelled among unknown men," 309.
"I wandered lonely as a cloud," 337.

Jock of Hazeldean, 413.
John Anderson my Jo, 295.
John Gilpin, 273.

KEATS, Introd., xiii; Poems, 544–580; Biog., 885–888.
Kubla Khan, 377.

La Belle Dame sans Merci, 568.
Lady of Shalott, The, 617.
Lady of the Lake, 392.
Lak of Stedfastnesse, 1.
L'Allegro, 130.
Lamia, 570.
Lancelot and Elaine, 699.
Last Ride Together, The, 776.
Lay of the Last Minstrel, The, 384.
Let me not to the marriage of true minds, 118.
Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore, 117.
Lines ("When the lamp is shattered"), 543.
Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey, 305.
Lines on the Mermaid Tavern ("Souls of Poets dead and gone"), 544.
Lines written among the Euganean Hills, 528.
Lines written in Kensington Gardens, 602.
London, 1802 ("Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour"), 333.
Lost Leader, The, 760.
Love, 367.
Love among the Ruins, 763.
Lovely Lass of Inverness, The, 297.
Love's Philosophy, 534.
Lucy Gray, 310.
Lycidas, 133.

Mac Flecknoe, 180.
"Maid of Athens," 449.
Marching Along, 759.
Mary Morison, 301.
Mazeppa, 474.
Memorial Verses, 611.
Michael, 324.
MILTON, Introd., vii; Poems, 127–179; Biog., 846–850.
Morality, 599.
"My heart leaps up when I behold," 330.

My heart's in the Highlands, 295.
My Last Duchess, 773.
My Star, 773.

Night-Piece to Julia, The, 124.
No longer mourn for me when I am dead, 118.
Nonne Prestes Tale, 14.
Not marble, nor the gilded monuments, 117.
"Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room," 340.
Nutting, 307.

Oberon's Feast, 122.
Ode ("Bards of Passion and of Mirth"), 560.
Ode. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood, 341.
Ode on a Grecian Urn, 567.
Ode on Solitude, 205.
Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, 666.
Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude, 248.
Ode to a Lady on the Death of Colonel Ross, in the action of Fontenoy, 240.
Ode to a Nightingale, 568.
Ode to Duty, 337.
Ode to Evening, 241.
Ode to Liberty, 239.
Ode to Liberty, 536.
Ode to Peace, 242.
Ode to Simplicity, 238.
Ode to the West Wind, 532.
Ode written in the beginning of the year 1746, 238.
Œnone, 618.
Of a' the Airts, 295.
"Oh! Snatch'd away in beauty's bloom," 455.
"O mistress mine, where are you roaming," 115.
On a Distant Prospect of Eton College, 244.
On first looking into Chapman's Homer, 544.
On his Blindness, 137.
On the Death of a Favorite Cat, 244.
On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic, 333.
On the Late Massacre in Piemont, 136.
On the Loss of the Royal George, 278.
On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, 127.
On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk, 276.
"O that 't were possible," 665.

Paradise Lost, 138.
Passing of Arthur, The, 742.
Pheidippides, 825.
Philomela, 598.
Pippa Passes, 751.
Pope, Introd., viii–ix; Poems, 205–237; Biog., 853–856.
Prioresses Tale, 10.
Prisoner of Chillon, The, 470.
Prometheus, 483.
Prospice, 797.
Prothalamion, 112.
Protus, 777.

Rabbi Ben Ezra, 790.
Rape of the Lock, 208.
Religio Laici, 183.
Requiescat, 581.
Resignation, 581.
Resolution and Independence, 330.
Ring and the Book. Book VII, 798.
Rokeby (Song: "O Brignall banks"), 412.
Rugby Chapel, 612.
Ruth, 310.

Saul, 766.
Saw ye Bonie Lesley, 299.
Scholar Gypsy, The, 603.
"Scorn not the Sonnet," 356.
Scots, wha hae, 299.
Scott, Introd., xii; Poems, 384–413; Biog., 877–879.
Shakespeare, Introd., vi; Poems, 115–118; Biog., 841–843.
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? 116.
"She dwelt among the untrodden ways," 309.
Shelley, Introd., xiii; Poems, 508–543; Biog., 883–885.
"She was a Phantom of delight," 337.
"She walks in beauty," 455.
Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea, 117.
Sohrab and Rustum, 584.
Solitary Reaper, The, 335.
Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, 345.
Song! Composed in August, 287.
Sonnet ("To one who has been long in city pent"), 544.
Sonnet ("When I have fears that I may cease to be"), 544.
Sonnet on the death of Mr. Richard West, 248.
Sonnet — Ozymandias, 528.
Sonnet to Lake Leman, 470.
Spenser, Introd., v; Poems, 21–114; Biog., 838–841.
Stanzas for Music ("There be none of Beauty's daughters"), 451.
Stanzas for Music ("There's not a joy the world can give"), 450.

Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse, 614.
Stanzas on Woman, 261.
Stanzas to Augusta ("Though the day of my destiny 's over"), 452.
Stanzas written in dejection near Naples, 532.
Stepping Westward, 335.
"Strange fits of passion have I known," 308.
Sweet and low, 627.

Tam O'Shanter, 290.
"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean," 627.
"Tell me where is fancy bred," 115.
TENNYSON, Introd., xiv; Poems, 617–750; Biog., 890–893.
That time of year thou mayst in me behold, 118.
The Argument of his Book, 119.
The Banks o' Doon, 297.
The Bracelet to Julia, 122.
The Captiv'd Bee, 120.
The Cloud, 534.
The Deserted Village, 255.
The Excursion, 346.
The Future, 602.
The Gloomy Night is gathering fast, 290.
The Last Sonnet ("Bright Star! would I were steadfast as thou art!"), 580.
The Last Word, 599.
The Lotos Eaters and the Choric Song, 622.
The Nightingale, 368.
Theodore and Honoria, 199.
The Passions. An Ode for Music, 242.
The Poplar Field, 278.
The Prelude, 313.
The Question, 541.
There was a Boy, 307.
There was a Lass, 301.
The Silver Tassie, 294.
"The splendor falls on castle walls," 627.
The Statue and the Bust, 778.
"The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill," 413.
The Tables Turned, 304.
The Task. Book V, 262.
The Traveller, 249.
The Trosachs, 357.
"The World is too much with us," 341.
The Wounded Cupid, 119.
Thou Lingering Star, 296.
"Three years she grew in sun and shower," 309.
Thyrsis, 608.
Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry, 117.
Tithonus, 625.
To ——— ("I fear thy kisses"), 541.
To ——— ("Music, when soft voices die"), 542.
To ——— ("One Word is too oft profaned"), 542.
To a Bed of Tulips, 123.
To Adversity, 247.
To a Louse, 287.
To a Mountain Daisy, 286.
To a Mouse, 285.
To Anthea, who may command him anything, 121.
To a Skylark, 535.
To a Skylark ("Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!"), 355.
To Autumn, 579.
To Blossoms, 123.
To Cherry-Blossoms, 121.
To Cyriack Skinner (1655), 137.
To Daffodils, 122.
To Daisies, not to shut so soon, 122.
To Dianeme (two poems), 119.
To His Book, 124.
To Keep a True Lent, 126.
To Mary, 279.
To me, fair friend, you never can be old, 118.
To Meadows, 121.
To Night, 542.
To Phyllis, to love and live with him, 123.
To the Cuckoo, 336.
To the Daisy ("Bright Flower! whose home is everywhere"), 334.
To the Lord General Cromwell, 136.
To the Nightingale, 279.
To the Pious Memory of . . . Mrs. Anne Killigrew, 193.
To the Queen, 749.
To the Virgins, to make much of time, 121.
To Toussaint L'Ouverture, 333.
Truth, 1.

Ulysses, 624.
"Under the greenwood tree," 115.
Up at a Villa — Down in the City, 764.
Upon Julia's Clothes, 124.

Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, 262.
Vision of Belshazzar, 455.

We are Seven, 303.
Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut, 296.
When Coldness wraps this suffering clay, 455.
"When I have borne in memory," 334.
When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced, 117.
When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes, 116.

When in the chronicle of wasted time, 118.
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought, 116.
"When we two parted," 449.
"Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?" 341.
"Where the bee sucks, there suck I," 116.
Wordsworth, Introd., xi–xii; Poems, 303–357; Biog., 871–874.
Work without Hope, 382.

Yarrow Visited, 354.
Yarrow Revisited, 356.
Yarrow Unvisited, 336.
Youth and Age, 382.

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